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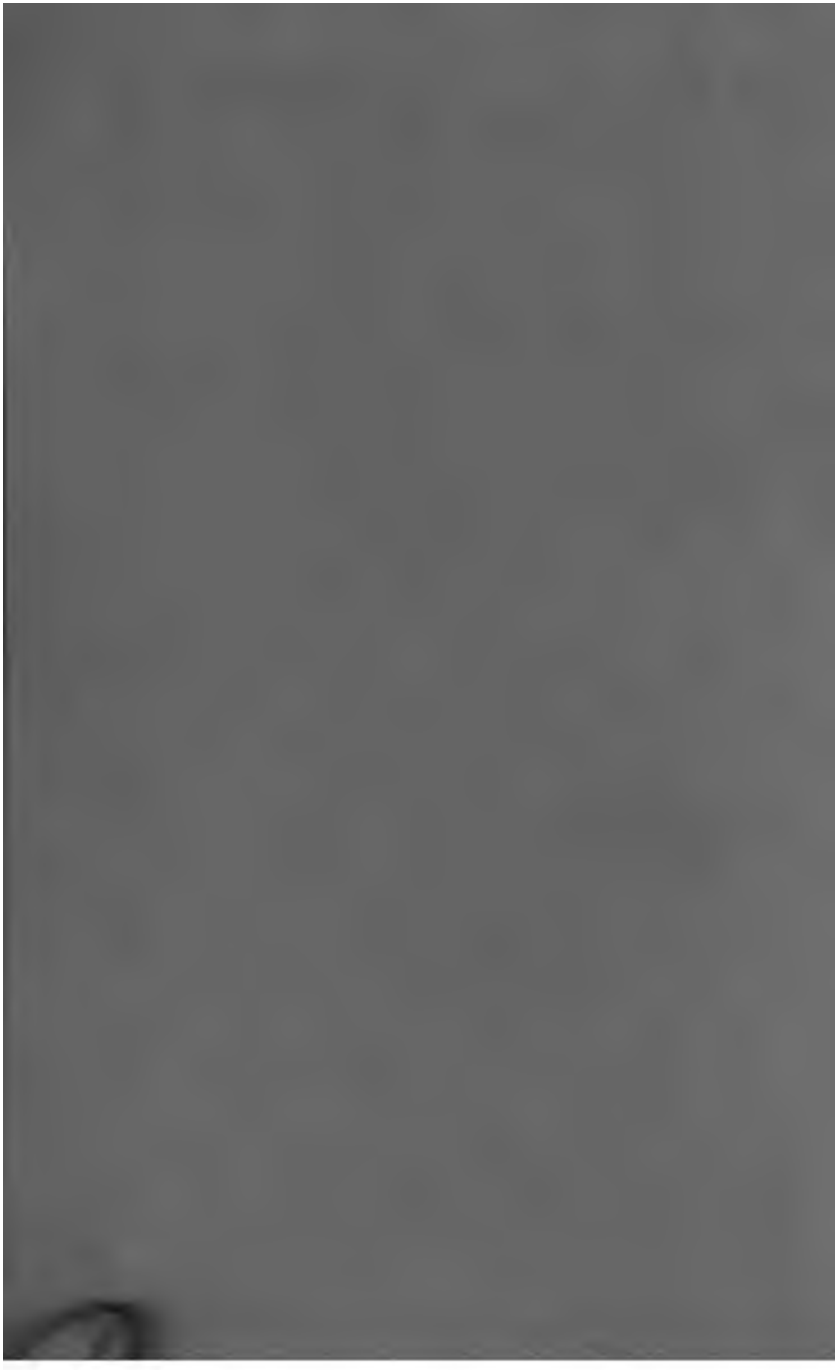

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THE MASTER OF THE WORLD

A Study of Christ

BY

CHARLES LEWIS SLATTERY
DEAN OF THE CATHEDRAL IN FARIBAULT

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LONDON AND BOMBAY
1906

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PREFACE

THIS book attempts to interpret Jesus Christ in the light of modern scholarship. The book has small sympathy with the man who believes in his Master so timidly that he dare not face hard questions. And a sympathy even more meagre is accorded to the man who takes to himself credit because he has reduced his faith in Christ to the most scant and dreary necessities.

I come back from my study of modern thought about Christ with a conviction that men are craving a larger, deeper faith in Him. Those who have thrown aside all ecclesiastical sanctions have often brought back a message singularly fresh and invigorating. The compelling amazement for His inner dignity, thus shorn of all external authority, seems to bring these gruff critics to their knees. They come to lay bare superstitions; again and again they go away devout worshippers: imbedded even in reckless negations one finds now and again glowing words of adoration. That the reader may conveniently judge for himself I have appended in footnotes fairly full quotations from all schools of recent scholars.

Though valuing to the full the historic interpretation of Christ, I have tried to avoid the technical lan-

guage in which this interpretation has from time to time sought expression. Certain great doctrines, like the Atonement, will be found illustrated all through the book; but I leave to the reader to construct the definite news which such fragments may supply. It has seemed to me that, indispensable as these older methods are, a somewhat different method might be advisable.

To friends who have helped me in various ways I acknowledge a grateful debt; especially to a great scholar whose name deserves a richer setting than this book can give.

C. L. S.

FARIBAULT, MINNESOTA,
July, 1906.

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Part First

THE SOURCES

THE MASTER OF THE WORLD

are asking persistently, "Who, just who, is the Historical Christ?" Their answer may be unsatisfactory; but because they ask the question, Christian scholars everywhere must be able to give a sane and sound reply, — satisfying, first, themselves, and then those who trust in their integrity and ability. Timidity or sloth rouses suspicion. A positive, enthusiastic, and learned Christian man who knows the pitfalls — a man like Dr. Sanday of Oxford — plants faith with every calm, brave word. The "Critical Life" is a necessity whenever men stumble over the facts.

There is still another way of presenting the Christ, and that is by giving an historical account of the conception which the Church has had of Him. This is the Christ of the Creeds, of the Church Councils, of the conspicuous theologians. As we believe that Christ has always lived in the Church, so this picture of the ecclesiastical Christ is essential. The portrait is not the frank, simple portrait of the Gospels, but the Man Christ Jesus is the same.[1] Dorner's master-

[1] *Cf.* Dr. K. C. Anderson (Hibbert Journal, July, 1906, pp. 853 f.): "No biography of Christ in the modern sense is possible, and just because of that the various Christ-ideals have arisen — the grandest, noblest thing Christianity has done for the race — and the grandest, noblest thing about the creation of the ideal is that it is ever expanding as the soul of man expands. If we had had a full biography of Jesus this would not have been possible. It is just because the details of the life of Jesus are so meagre that the ideal of the Christ has grown around it — giving it in the first place a location and a name, and, in the second place, finding for it new organs of expression in every age, developing new powers, and assimilating new elements of human life as that life grows richer and deeper." It should be pointed out that this manifestation of the *ideal* is the manifestation of the *real* Christ — as we are able to understand Him.

piece on "The Doctrine of the Person of Christ" is in a valid sense a Life of Christ.

It would seem perhaps as if such studies did all that could be done to satisfy legitimately the craving for knowledge of our Lord. I am sure, however, that there is one other very vital way to present Christ. It is the most difficult, the most dangerous. It attempts to gather up all the facts recorded about Christ, whether by people who lived in His age or by the generations since; to fuse them; and thereby to tell somewhat of His personality. It tries to unify all the records, all the subsequent doctrines, all the present faith; and, pointing to its own faltering words of humble, reverent description, it says, "This is the Person of Christ — so far as I can understand." It is illusive, like all greatest tasks. It is obviously beyond any man's skill. But it is most worth while of all undertakings.

Nor, as I said, is this sort of presentation of Christ free of peril. If one is afraid to read between the lines, if one is afraid to use the imagination, if one's love dare not paint what one feels but cannot fully explain, one would wisely throw the pen aside with the first word. The difficulty is that some imagination is not reverent. The sensitive disciple shivers when a facile person says, "This is what the Saviour thought when He healed the blind man, — when He comforted the widow, — when He went out of Jerusalem to die." Imagination is not the vagary of any ingenious inventor; it must have a reason, it must appeal to the man who hears or reads as justified by well-attested facts. To presume to talk of what

Christ thought when no recorded facts imply, even to the most clever scrutiny, what He thought, is that sort of irreverence which is first stupid and then gross. To summon the facts, to put a fact here beside a fact there, to *feel* the trend of the character which could thus express itself, is often to bring to light a trait not definitely described in any document, and so to reveal a new fact which all reasonable men must confess to be, if not certain, at least most probable.

If such a task as this, confessedly hard, comes close also to danger, its possible compensations are worth every risk. As no man has ever painted a Christ which satisfies the heart and mind and soul of the Christian, so no one ever has described Him as the best men *feel* that He is. Probably pictures and descriptions both will fail till the end. But such failures must be the most alluring opportunities to the workman who loves His Master: rather would a man fail at such high business, if honestly his best, than do anything else superbly well.

The problem is difficult and is dangerous. Therefore we must first look scrupulously to the facts, to see how many they are and whence they come.

CHAPTER II

Primary Sources

IN measuring the reasonableness of any assertion, the authority of a truth-conserving organisation has great weight. It is not mere piety, but hard-headedness, therefore, which leads a man, in taking note of the facts of Christ's life, to put confidence in the authority of the Christian Church. Nevertheless, authority, when relied upon exclusively, becomes a thing of suspicion. It is well, then, at times to abstract this authority, so far as one can, and to look at the facts of Christ's life apart from the institution which has been chiefly concerned in keeping them. Legitimate authority has nothing to fear from such a course; candid investigation can but reinforce its validity.

Though in so brief a book it will be impossible to enter with thoroughness into a discussion of the sources, what examination we do make must ask questions of unprejudiced scholars. For it is well to remember that some scholars are so influenced by prejudice in favour of the accepted authorities of the past that they become only special pleaders, and their own investigation has no weight. Other scholars there are, so influenced by prejudice against all older

conceptions of ancient facts that they gird themselves for a tilt at the faintest suggestion of a traditionary view: their investigations are increasingly being discounted, and so free a lance as Harnack has startled them by saying that the traditional is not bound to make excuses for itself, but may stand confident till its assailants have proved their case — a feat which he is less and less inclined to believe that they can accomplish. The unprejudiced scholar, as you will suspect, is a rare person. He need not be a heartless machine weighing evidence; still, for the time being, he must be able to put his heart, with all its preferences and loves, aside, and look at all facts coldly, with longing neither to confirm nor to destroy.

If the reader protest that the scholars who deal with sources are for the most part prejudiced, one way or the other, — almost violently prejudiced, — yet he is forced to use their investigations in making up his own mind, he is altogether justified. Any full investigation of the work of original scholars to-day must include men whose minds are almost warped with prejudice. But their work can still be used rationally if the reader will do for himself what the original investigator should have done for him: the reader must trim off the excrescences of prejudice, and by an effort of rational imagination discover what the writer would have said had he been without prejudice. It is a difficult undertaking, but if one has no power to do it one can get no valid news from the ultra-conservative or the ultra-radical, who, in spite of acumen and industry, practically cease, because of their prejudice, to be scholars at all.

The necessarily brief examination of the sources which follows will hope to be the summary of the views of unprejudiced scholarship so attained. We may have reasonable assurance that the facts so won are fixed; and if, at last, they should be found to agree with the inherited records and traditions of the Church, those who depend upon authority will not have studied in vain: their conviction that the authority of the Church is reasonable will be strengthened, and they will know that they live in a house not made with hands.

I. *The Epistles*

The Sources for Christ's Life which are first in time are the Epistles of St. Paul. Even radical critics are essentially unanimous in ascribing Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans to St. Paul. This is significant. It makes these documents incontestable witnesses to facts in Christ's Life within a few years of His Resurrection. Lightfoot[1] in his day put these four Epistles in 57 and 58; that is, less than thirty years after the Resurrection. Professor Harnack[2] and his American pupil, Professor McGiffert,[3] working independently, place these Epistles much earlier, — from about 46 to about 53; that is, a period after Christ's Resurrection ranging from sixteen to twenty-three years. Professor Bacon[4] falls back to a date somewhat later, from 50 to 55, but

[1] "Biblical Essays," p. 222.

[2] "Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius," pp. 233–239. A.D. 52–53, 54.

[3] "The Apostolic Age," p. 673. A.D. 46 (c)–52, 53.

[4] "Introduction to the New Testament," p. 280.

still not more than twenty-five years from the Resurrection.

There is ample reason to believe Thessalonians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon certainly the work of St. Paul, according to a sane and impartial scholarship;[1] but the fact that Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans are practically not even whispered against is sufficiently important to make us fix attention on them alone. What do these four Epistles tell us of Christ?

These letters were written, then, within a genera-

[1] *Cf.* Professor E. D. Burton, "Present Problems of New Testament Study," Am. Jour. Theol., April, 1905, p. 217: "As is well known, it has gradually come to be recognised that the kind of evidence which establishes the genuineness of Galatians, First and Second Corinthians and Romans exists also in the case of First Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon. The present attitude of scholarship is represented, not by the phrase, 'the four undisputed letters of Paul,' but rather by the expression, 'the generally accepted letters of Paul.' . . . Respecting Second Thessalonians, Colossians, and Ephesians, the situation is somewhat different. The trend of opinion is very strongly toward the acceptance of Colossians . . . as a real letter of the Apostle himself. . . . That Ephesians is . . . a sermon or theological essay, . . . and that only as such can it be regarded as a genuine letter of Paul, is now generally admitted. . . The objection to the acceptance of Second Thessalonians as Paul's, on the ground that the eschatalogical views embodied in its apocalyptic section are inconsistent with those expressed in First Thessalonians is accorded less weight than formerly. The similarity of the Epistle . . . to First Thessalonians . . . is a phenomenon that doubtless requires explanation; but it must be doubted whether it is not easier to account for this than for the creation, with no clearly evident motive, of an epistle so clearly resembling Paul's in general tone and style, yet proceeding in fact from another and considerably later hand."

tion of our Lord's public ministry. Many who read them, or heard them read, must have been witnesses of some of the events of that ministry, — for people in those days were industrious travellers, and the Jews were everywhere, not to speak of Romans and Greeks. Moreover, with the exception of the Epistle to the Romans, these letters were called forth by particular exigencies in Corinth and Galatia, and do not pretend to summarise either the facts or the doctrines of Christianity. Of course, the Epistle to the Romans is a great doctrinal Epistle; but even here the facts of Christ's life are taken for granted. The references or allusions to facts in our Lord's life are purely incidental. All are assumed as well known to the reader. For this reason such allusions and references have weighty significance: such facts were commonly accepted by people who had a chance to verify them through living witnesses.

Now what are these facts? He was accepted by many as the "Messiah" — the title occurs over two hundred times. He was looked upon as the Son of God (Gal. iv. 4). He was counted sinless (2 Cor. v. 21). He was crucified, dead, and buried, and rose again the third day (1 Cor. xv. 3). His death had already helped people to be righteous (2 Cor. v. 21). Then there are minor facts recorded: Christ was "of the seed of David" (Rom. i. 3); He was "poor" (2 Cor. viii. 9); He appeared to St. Peter, among others, after His Resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 5).

All these details are salient lines toward a portrait of Christ. But very much more important is the reflection of Christ in the inner life of the writer.

The authors of the Pauline Epistles, of the Johannine Epistles, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of St. Peter, of St. James, and of St. Jude all do one thing of transcendent significance which no question of date or authorship can affect: they all are aglow with the influence of a single personality. And that personality is Christ. More essential than any fact about Christ is Christ himself. From these letters the person of Christ stands out: one feels His presence there. Does St. Paul talk of justification by faith? It is because St. Paul has come to a divine peace through a sublime confidence that Christ believes in him. Does St. John talk of loving all men? It is because Christ has filled his heart with an overwhelming love. Does St. Peter talk of orderly submission to all in authority? It is because Christ has brought unity into his own once confused nature.

Whether much or little is yielded to searching, even hostile critics of the Epistles, this one fact is obtrusively plain: a personality of remarkable, of unique power had grappled the writers to His heart and made them His. There is grave danger of losing a sane point of view in discussing the authorship of the Second Epistle of St. Peter; in determining how far the Pastoral Epistles have remained St. Paul's, how far they have grown[1] (as our modern hymns grow) under the devotional and practical use of the Early

[1] "This explanation of the nature of the Pastoral Epistles does not deprive them of their significance, it only changes the character of that significance. . . . We owe to the two earlier epistles the preservation of Pauline fragments which will ever remain precious." — Von Soden, "History of Early Christian Literature," tr. J. R. Wilkinson, p. 322.

Church; and in all similar contentions. It has been said that Green would have written a better history of England had he known less of England and correspondingly more of Europe. In the same way New Testament scholars, conservative and radical, would often know a truer story of the Epistles if they could look at them in their wholeness, in their wider relationships, and would let the small critical questions of exact date and exact authorship melt into their relatively insignificant places. This is no word in favour of easy-going methods, or slipshod smoothing over of difficult details. It is but the warning to put the big fact in its great place and keep it there. The tremendous fact of the Epistles is that within a very short time after the vanishing of Jesus of Nazareth, letters were written, which we still have, telling by their unconscious trend how one man of rugged action, another man with organising ability, still another with a mystic idealism, and another with the plainest common sense unadorned by flashes of eloquence, all were one in the spirit and power of Jesus. It is the message of Christ to their inner life which with naïve simplicity they put all through their words and between the lines. It is interesting that in the four Epistles which Renan used to call "incontestables et incontestées," one can get so vigorous an outline (sketched in incidentally) of Christ's life. But the main fact is that Christ Himself is there.

Lest, however, one get the impression that the witness borne to the details of Christ's life is insignificant in the Epistles, let us glance at the witness to the Resurrection of Jesus in the fifteenth chapter of

the first Epistle to the Corinthians. This chapter, recall, is universally conceded St. Paul's. From the "great four" Epistles (notably from Galatians) we learn much of St. Paul's character, — his "straitness," his stubborn hold upon what he believes right, his painstaking corroboration of facts. The introductory words of this fifteenth chapter are a concise history of his own investigation of the Resurrection. He was not content with any subjective assurance. His old opposition died hard. He proved by objective marshalling of witnesses what was presented to him for belief. He "received" the facts of Christ's life: he did not deliver them because they appealed to him as ideally appropriate. He investigated this stupendous fact of Jesus' Resurrection: Christ was seen by St. Peter, then by the Twelve, then by five hundred at once. That, you observe, gives no chance for subjective hallucination. More than two hundred and fifty of these witnesses still lived, and could be asked for their evidence. Here is a document which Professor McGiffert says was circulated a little more than twenty years after Christ's Resurrection. It was written by a hard-headed practical man (so the letters show him) in a time when he knew that his word could readily be tested. If this chapter with the surrounding material of the "four epistles" alone survived among the documents of the Apostolic Age, it would be difficult for a critic of internal evidences to avoid accepting as an historical fact the Resurrection of Christ.

So the Epistles do give us high assurance of historic facts in Christ's life. Notwithstanding, their supreme

value must always be that they are the earliest testimony to the power of Christ to influence, transform, and dominate the inner life of men. They tell us what no mere history could tell: they make us *feel* the presence of Christ.

II. *The Synoptic Gospels*

For thirty years — about a generation — the followers of Christ depended upon oral tradition for the details of His career. This is natural. In a community to-day, especially if the community includes no professional literary folk, records of important local events are seldom made into a history until the witnesses of those events begin to disappear from the stage of life. Then some one rises to say, "Before it is too late we must get from the surviving witnesses the exact record of this stirring story, and we must have it recorded in a book." This, natural in our own day, was inevitable in the first century among an unlettered following, without our cheap and easy ways of making permanent records; more especially because oral tradition was a vastly more accurate source of information in those days, — when Greek boys sometimes learned all of Homer and Hebrew boys sometimes could repeat the whole Old Testament Law, — than it ever can be in our time, when nothing is remembered which can be marked on a printed page or hastily scribbled down with a pencil. Moreover, the constant expectation of Christ's return was an extraordinary obstacle to permanent records. The oral tradition, gathered from Apostolic Sermons, from the lips of parents, from the testimony of eye-witnesses

given to curious friends, was the first Gospel, and was a definite Gospel, needing to be reckoned with, though unwritten.

But the generation was passing. One would expect the oral tradition to begin, at least, to take written form. "I do not doubt," says Professor Sanday, in his last book,[1] "that the most active period for the putting together of material for Gospels was the decade 60–70 A.D." This is exactly what we should expect.

The first written record, so far as we can trace it, scholars now practically agree, was the *Logia*[2] of St. Matthew. The record of the reliable Irenæus[3] says that Matthew published his Gospel in Hebrew (Aramaic) "while Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the Church in Rome." Modern scholars are accepting this date (which would be not later than 66 A.D. and might be easily almost a decade earlier), making the "Gospel," not our Gospel as we have it to-day, but the *Logia*, or *Sayings*, of Christ, in Ara-

[1] "The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," p. 217.

[2] Exception is sometimes taken to the title "Logia" (*e.g.*, Dean J. A. Robinson's "Study of the Gospels," pp. 68 ff.), on the ground that its use in Papias is descriptive and not specifically by way of a title. But even so keen an objector as the Dean of Westminster admits (*Op. Cit.*, p. 92) that in this "lost non-Marcan document" he finds absolute evidence for but one narrative portion — the healing of the centurion's servant. He finds "the teaching," which is essentially the book, to be "conversational," "succinct," "paradoxical," "startling." It is perhaps well to remember that the title "Logia" is an arbitrary convenience of modern scholarship, but it so simply and accurately describes the almost certain nature of the lost document that one is justified in its use.

[3] "Adv. Haer." 3: 1, 1.

maic. This again is natural. The very words of Christ, recorded in the language in which He spoke them, would be a most sacred book. It was perhaps the departure of the authoritative teachers from Jerusalem, in the troubled years before the siege, that induced this relatively obscure Apostle to put down the *Logia.* In any case the book in its original form is lost to us; but has become, as we shall see, an important source for existing narratives.

Scholars are happily agreed upon the next document; and that is St. Mark. This is the oldest of the four Gospels, as we now have them, and was written probably not long before A.D. 70, perhaps as early as 65. The tradition that the author wrote from the memory of speeches or conversations of St. Peter is increasingly approved by scholars; and the ordinary reader, impressed by the quickness and straightness of the narrative, is convinced that the writer was very close to an "eye-witness." Less than the other Gospels is there a purpose in St. Mark; that is, the other Gospels aim to reach one kind of readers, or exhibit an especial phase of Christ's life: St. Mark gives a rapid summary of Christ's deeds, not many of His words, with the general purpose of telling men who He was.

St. Matthew was written very soon after St. Mark. Again we find scholars essentially agreed upon the method of the composition of this book. The original St. Matthew, it will be recalled, was an Aramaic book, and consisted of the Lord's *Sayings.* Various traditions have been sounded, but the theory that is now practically an assured fact is that a writer in Greek

made up our present St. Matthew by combining the *Logia* of St. Matthew with the *events* of St. Mark. This made a fuller Life — if such a word can be applied to any of the Gospels. The author also had a distinct purpose: he wished to show that our Saviour was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Writing in a time when vivid memories would retain many words and deeds of Christ, the author might naturally add well-certified words and facts not recorded in these two "sources." But the grouping of the *Logia* in Chapters V–VII, X, XIII, XVIII, XXIII–XXV,[1] as well as the name[2] which tradition has given the book, makes one feel how near the Gospel is to the *Logia* in Aramaic; and the narrative is extremely close to St. Mark.[3]

[1] The "Formula" is interesting and significant; *cf.* vii. 28; xix. 1; xxvi. 1. Also, xi. 1; xiii. 53.

[2] Gospel according to St. Matthew.

[3] A good many modern scholars are giving our present St. Matthew a later date than St. Luke. This is partly because St. Matthew's interest in the "Ecclesia," his emphasis upon the Lord's Supper, his giving the full formula of Baptism, all tend to show that he was in sympathy with the ecclesiastical temper which prevailed later in the century. It has been often noted (*e.g.*, Rev. L. Pullan's "Christian Tradition," p. 6) that St. Matthew's Gospel is "homiletical": its use of the Old Testament made it a favourite in the early ages because it was especially useful for preachers. The compiler of the First Gospel has the homiletical instinct: he feels obliged to explain. For this very reason the modern scholar prefers the literary St. Luke. "The historian," says the Dean of Westminster ("The Study of the Gospels," pp. 101 f.), "will prefer St. Luke, as an accurate writer who made it his business to collect and sift information. He cannot feel a like certainty from the historical point of view in dealing with state-

In St. Luke scholars find a distinctly different tone. The period of oral tradition is past by some considerable time. The dedication is highly significant. Many people, the author says, had undertaken to write accounts of Christ's Life. He modestly tells that his qualification was that he had the knowledge of all the facts of the Life from the first. But the literary finish of his Gospel, with its rich vocabulary, joined to the fact that he was St. Paul's intimate friend (Philem. 24; Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11), make one feel that he may have been chosen by Church leaders to do this definite literary task: first, to tell the story of Christ, and then the story of the spread of His Gospel (as we have it in the Acts). A very important fact to bear in mind is that the "witnesses" of Christ's Life and the immediate disciples of those witnesses

ments which are only attested by the unknown writer of the First Gospel. He is bound to consider how far they may have been coloured and modified by his peculiar interest in the Old Testament, and by his life and surroundings in the Early Christian Church." All this may be true, but the homiletical instinct is temperamental and is not "early" or "late." It is practically certain that neither the first nor the third Evangelist was aware of the other's book. It is sometimes urged that St. Luke more accurately represents the divisions of the "Logia" than St. Matthew. But it is quite as probable that St. Matthew incorporated the "sayings" with the least possible change; and St. Luke, having learned when some words were said, when others, and so on, deliberately broke up the continuous teaching of the "Logia" into such fragments as the setting of "his thorough information" required. The question of priority is in any case unimportant, especially since the mutual ignorance of each other's books shows that their writing must have been fairly close in time. Meantime, it seems safer to give our present St. Matthew a slightly earlier date.

(those who knew their testimony by heart) were widely scattered. Because different men in their teaching would inevitably lay stress on different parts of our Lord's utterances or different facts of His Life, some communities would have unique contributions to make to any general account. Any traveller, or missionary, must have felt the need of collecting these accounts, even if the end of the world seemed quite near. But after the destruction of Jerusalem — which seemed to the Jewish Christians the "clap of doom" — the end seemed less imminent, inasmuch as the world had not collapsed at once. We can imagine that when St. Luke went about on his journeys, or when he talked with the leaders of the Church, practical men with no gift of literary expression urged him to put into dignified and sufficiently condensed form all the material that was at hand. This material evidently included the *Logia* of St. Matthew and our Gospel according to St. Mark. But beside this was a large mass of new material; the parables, for instance, many of which are found only in St. Luke. It is definitely announced in the prologue that many "Lives" are extant. The prologue also shows the author a Greek of rhetorical cultivation. Many passages of the body of the work show how scrupulously, in spite of literary taste, he clung to the rough Aramaic original, which, in such passages, for the time being, was his "source." He, more nearly than the other Evangelists, wrote a biography; but in the use of his material he was painstaking to be exact rather than polished. It is the most "human" of the Gospels: details of childhood, of pain, of joy, of

sympathy, have for him an especial force. It was written, probably, not far from A.D. 80.[1]

It is quite possible that a scholar, radical or conservative, might shake his head over this hasty review of the Synoptic Gospels, and say, here and there, "Unwarranted assumption." But in general, however details of investigation may fall out, I feel convinced that the outline is true. Both the Prologue of St. Luke and a study of the internal evidences make us aware that the three "Synoptics" are "survivals of the fittest" from a rather large literary output. Everything points to their being written far from the scenes they describe, and this, with the complete annihilation of great Jewish landmarks in A.D. 70, gives the accurate details of place and custom (proved accurate by modern investigation) deep significance. The writers had seen and heard what they wrote about, or they had immediate access to eye-witnesses or "original documents." For our purpose the reader would be only blinded by a discussion of minute points. The passages of duplication, where the exact diction is repeated in two, or perhaps all three, of the Gospels; the reasons for additions or omissions; the possibility of later editorship, are all enticing problems. But they are not vital. What we wish to know, what we must know, is whether the Synoptic Gospels are trustworthy records of our Saviour's Life. An impartial scholarship, sufficiently critical to sift the truth without destroying it, comes back from its labour with an indomitable "Yes." The Gospel of

[1] To this date even Dr. Harnack has now given consent. See his "Lukas der Arzt" (1906), pp. 108, 115 f.

the Infancy as given in St. Luke,[1] for example, is written from the human standpoint rather than the divine; and in its naïve, straightforward simplicity is far removed from the rather bleak dogmatism of a later age. It is the dogmatism that has created the suspicion; and, in some cases, has blinded eyes, otherwise sharp, to the historic sincerity of the Synoptic narrative. It is the part of good scholarship to find in these three Gospels ample material to give the reader a picture of Jesus of Nazareth as He was to the people of His own day. It is neither blurred nor over-coloured. Men keenly awake to the necessity of telling the truth exactly wrote the Synoptic Gospels.

III. *The Fourth Gospel*

With the Fourth Gospel we enter a new domain. It unites the characteristics of a "Gospel" with those of an "Epistle." It is a "Life of Christ," but it is that Life as it touched the life of the author. It is

[1] Professor Ramsay, in his "Was Christ Born in Bethlehem?" has candidly met the radical critics of this narrative with an exhaustive critical examination of several details, such as the Syrian enrolment in 8 B.C., and the governorship of Quirinius. In general defence of St. Luke's historic veracity, he says: "It is a matter of interest to observe how slow some very learned New Testament scholars are to appreciate the principle, which is regarded as fundamental by the historical and antiquarian students, that no conjecture which is not founded on clear evidence has any right even to be propounded, if it contradicts the direct statement of an ancient authority. Much less ought the ancient authority to be discredited because he disagrees with a loose and disputed modern conjecture" (pp. 268, 269). *A priori* objections to unique beginnings to a life obviously unique in its outcome are not soundly critical.

almost more autobiographical than biographical. The author began to live the day his old master, John Baptist, turned him to Christ. The second day of the narrative is the second day of that new and real life lived in the presence of Christ. And so on to the end. The words of Christ have passed through the nature of the author, but they are only the more real because perhaps not exactly as Christ spoke them. Sometimes it is impossible to distinguish the author's comment from the Saviour's word: even this does not matter, for one is always coming nearer to the heart of Christ. The Fourth Gospel is not the work of a chronicler; it is the culminating expression of a man who has experienced all the vicissitudes of life, and whose soul has grasped the divine in the Person of One Man. The author's personality is lost in the personality of his Divine Hero.

The battle of criticism [1] has been raging about this book, largely because until about 170 A.D. it is not definitely referred to in Christian literature. But Dr. Sanday, in his great book,[2] points out that since the survivals of Christian literature between A.D. 100 and 170 are exceedingly fragmentary, it is uncritical to base any important matter on the argument from silence; especially when, even in this little, it is quite reasonable to detect allusions in quotations. Dr. Sanday also wisely reminds us that time is required to give a document sanctity before it is quoted

[1] In reviewing the question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel I shall touch only upon the most salient features; since a juster and a clearer verdict may thus be obtained.

[2] "The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," p. 238.

as an authority. Moreover, when direct references to the Fourth Gospel do appear they appear in documents emanating from Vienne,[1] Lyons,[1] Rome,[2] Carthage,[3] Ephesus,[4] Antioch,[5] Alexandria,[6] — all the strategical points of the Empire. Sound criticism finding scattered authorities in agreement always seeks a common archetype in a much earlier day. The unprejudiced critic would expect to find the common cause, whence the various traditions sprang, at least as far back as A.D. 100, — about the time it must have been written.[7]

Of this external evidence, that of Irenæus is practically sufficient. This writer, Bishop of Lyons, was in his youth a pupil of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who in turn was a pupil of St. John. Irenæus, whose reliability is proverbial among scholars, dwells upon his memory of Polycarp's conversations about St. John.[8] And Irenæus is unwavering in his testimony that the Fourth Gospel is St. John's.[9] His prede-

[1] Irenæus. [2] Tatian, Heracleon. [3] Tertullian.
[4] Polycrates. [5] Theophilus. [6] Clement.

[7] Harnack gives as the date A.D. 80–110.

[8] "Adv. Haer." Book iii. Ch. xi. *Cf.* Ch. i. 1.

[9] For the attempt to identify the John here referred to with "John the Elder," see (in support thereof) article by Professor B. W. Bacon, Hibbert Journal, April, 1903, pp. 510 ff.; or, more recently, Baron Von Soden's "Early Christian Literature" (tr. Wilkinson), p. 428. But it is impossible to yield to this argument. The theory advanced is that Irenæus was quoting from Papias and confused the "Johns." Irenæus is conceived as knowing of the great Apostle — the leader of his own home district — only through Papias and a brief conference with Polycarp. As Dr. Sanday clearly shows (*Op. Cit.*, pp. 60 ff.), Irenæus must have had many sources of information. Even Dr. McGiffert is emphatic: "It cannot be supposed," he says,

cessor in the See of Lyons, Pothinus, was ninety at his death in A.D. 177, and must have known many of the early Fathers, and so must have had a fund of accurate information of Apostolic times.

Moreover, Irenæus spent, it is believed,[1] twenty years in Rome, a centre to which reports and traditions came from all quarters. But his direct connection, through Polycarp, with St. John himself, is worth everything — even if it were his only source of information, which it is not. The testimony of Irenæus would need insurmountable difficulties to overthrow it. Though it chances to be given eighty years or so after the writing of the Fourth Gospel, we must not be blind to his unique opportunities and his accepted accuracy.

But the main evidence for the authorship must always rest in the Fourth Gospel itself. The common method of testing the authorship has become classic. It asks first whether the author was a Jew; then whether a Palestinian Jew; then whether an eye-witness; finally, whether he was St. John the Apostle.

The language, full of Hebraisms, the care to give Aramaic names for men and things, the easy knowledge of Jewish laws and customs, all mark the author a Jew. Further, the author has never yet been caught mistaken in his geography, the one example which hostile critics have found in the name "Sea of Ti-

"that Irenæus, who knew Polycarp personally, could commit such a blunder. He had not merely met Polycarp casually; he was his pupil, and he must have known of whom he spoke when he referred to John." ("Apostolic Age," p. 607; also note 3, p. 623.)

[1] See Lightfoot's "Ignatius," iii. 402.

berias" for "Sea of Galilee," having been turned to account for the traditional date of authorship; because though "Sea of Tiberias" was the second-century name for the lake, the author wrote in a time when both names were in vogue, therefore in the time of transition, which must have been — as such things go — about A.D. 100. The author, it will be recalled, uses both names, so definitely marking the transition period. Other capital arguments are at hand, but this accurate geographical knowledge is enough to prove the writer a Palestinian Jew. That the author was an eye-witness becomes clearer as critics magnify details. The knowledge of contemporary history is most delicate, especially in the allusions to Jewish parties. The vivid references to landmarks in Jerusalem — a wreck after the year 70 — unnecessary details in descriptions of the mountain where "there was much grass," of the fields where the corn was waving, of the house which was filled with perfume of ointment — all bespeak the eye-witness.[1]

But the most convincing evidence of the eye-witness

[1] Very interesting witness to this vividness of detail is borne by Baron von Soden, in his recent book, "The History of Early Christian Literature" (English translation) p. 391: "The touches are often marvellously delicate. We feel, as it were, the fresh breath of morning as the disciples pass to and fro at the Jordan. The night wind rustles round the chamber, whither Nicodemus has crept in secret. The ripening sun of summer shines upon the scene by Jacob's well. Twilight falls upon the chamber where the Master washes His disciples' feet; and as Judas goes forth there is the darkness of night." Baron von Soden does not fall in with the tradition, though he is very close to it. He makes the author a disciple of John the Elder — who was "the beloved disciple."

is the clear-cut delineation of subordinate characters. Philip, Andrew, Mary, and Martha appear incidentally here and there, but always with the clearest consistency. Though it admits of no proof, Dr. Sanday's explanation of the author's reference to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved,[1] — whereby the author unconsciously sank his personality in a title as Christ sank His in the title, "Son of Man," — appeals strongly to one's imagination, and, in so far, adds a further emphasis upon the direct knowledge of the author.

So, at length, we come to the question, Was the author the Apostle John? Any criticism which appeals to the average man as sane brings the authorship to a narrow circle of possibility: the author was an immediate follower of St. John, acting as scribe; or he was an unknown disciple of Christ, too young to be an Apostle, but always with Him[2]; or he was the Apostle John. The tradition is strong in favour of the authorship of St. John the Apostle: and tradition to-day has great weight in the scholars' world. Moreover, the difficulties of all internal evidence are

[1] *Op. Cit.*, p. 79.

[2] This would identify the "unknown" with "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The theory is most completely worked out by Dr. Hugo Delff ("Das vierte Evangelium wiederhergestellt," and "Neue Beiträge zur Kritik und Erklärung des vierten Evangeliums"). Dr. Sanday's chief criticism of the theory is very strong: in the Synoptic Gospels St. John and St. Peter are constantly associated as most intimate friends; in the Fourth Gospel, St. Peter and the beloved disciple. It is natural to identify these pairs of friends ("Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," p. 107). It will be noted that theories like Delff's and Von Soden's leave the Fourth Gospel as a witness of the very first importance, — it comes from an eye-witness or a disciple of an eye-witness.

diminished by accepting the Johannine authorship: no other eye-witness so clearly fills the situation. But, in any case, the book is testimony of the first order.

The effort to make the Gospel a composite production never can succeed. It is too strongly marked with unity. It tells with consistency how Christ came to His own and was rejected by them. It is a great tragedy. And it is from one man's point of view — the point of view of a dearest friend.

The book is best understood when it is called autobiography. There is distinctly Jewish home memory, but the author lets you know at once that he is not at home. He lives where philosophical names are in vogue. He explains Jewish phrases for his Greek thinking neighbour. But the significant point is that though touching upon such a Greek term as ὁ Λόγος, he never philosophises. The least tendency to metaphysics is at once dissipated by a succeeding flow of historical narrative. Moreover, the minute details indicate the vivid memory of an old man. The late Andrew Peabody, of blessed memory, used to testify, in this very connection, that in his old age memories of past scenes came back to him, which in years intervening had been quite forgotten; so he used to say that the minute details of this Gospel were to him psychological proof that it was written by a very old man. An old Jew, living in a Greek city, agog with philosophic ideas, — that is surely quite like the traditional St. John living in Ephesus.[1] Then with

[1] I perhaps ought to mention the assertion credited to Papias ("Expositions," Book II), that "John the Divine and James his brother were put to death by the Jews." The easiest form of

the modest keeping his name "out of print," the old man's weakness conquers now and then and he puts colour into his anonymity: he knew the High Priest; he was the first disciple to believe that Jesus had risen. It is not boasting, though unsympathetic youth may call it so. Again, the personal feelings of the author are strongly displayed. There is manifest personal interest in Peter; Judas is always named with bitterness.

An argument which I have never seen set forth has for me great weight. Our Lord was a statesman. He founded a kingdom: He meant it to last. To start this kingdom He chose twelve men as Apostles. They were picked men. They had special "gifts." Now a man of such insight and intention, had He been only an ordinary genius, must have chosen one mind capable of such development that in time He might with him have sympathetic intercourse. The fine, intellectual, spiritual fibre of St. John, as we see him in this book, Christ must have demanded. If I did not find somewhere the trace of His choosing an Apostle who could comprehend the deep things, and

disposing of the difficulty is to make "the Divine" and "his brother" additions by a later hand, since "the Divine" is, critically, impossible for Papias. The "John" would then refer easily to the Baptist. Dr. Sanday, with his accustomed caution and fairness, considers with deference the assertion, as it stands (*Op. Cit.*, pp. 103 f.; 107 f.; 250 ff.); but when Lightfoot and Professor Harnack join in dismissing it as unhistorical, we cannot allow so slight and doubtful a passage to contradict the strong tradition that St. John lived to old age, especially when the tradition is confirmed by Irenæus who knew the writings of Papias. See Lightfoot's "Essays on 'Supernatural Religion,'" pp. 211 ff.; and Harnack's "Chronologie," Bd. II. 665 ff.

who could directly transmit a conception of Him adequate to the inspiration of the Church in all ages, then I should find Christ the Statesman a contradiction. There must have been among the disciples of a Master like Christ at least one man who could understand more than the mere events, more even than the mere words, — there must have been one who could understand the Life — the Life in its relation to the world. This man must have been our Lord's most intimate friend: to him Christ must have poured out the striving and conquest of His soul, for he must have been the man who, approximately at least, knew Him. We have the evidence of the Fourth Gospel that St. John did thus understand Him, — not philosophically, but none the less deeply for that reason. No other, either in tradition or in history, can be assigned the task. If there are difficulties in assigning the Gospel to St. John, there are infinite difficulties in robbing him of the honour of having written the greatest book ever written by the hand of man.

In the other Gospels we have information about Christ which is the most valid history, but we are not sure that it is written down by those who themselves saw and heard what they describe. It is practically impossible to doubt that the Fourth Gospel is written by any other than the Saviour's most intimate friend, — he who knew Christ not only face to face, but heart to heart, and soul to soul. It is the crowning document of the revelation of the personality of Christ to the world.

CHAPTER III

Secondary Sources

IF the documents of the New Testament had all perished, we should still have definite knowledge of Christ. There are other sources of information about Him of serious importance.

I. *Foreign Testimony*

Slight as is the reference to our Lord in contemporary literature outside the Christian writers, it is nevertheless significant. Josephus in "The Antiquities"[1] distinctly refers to Him. Tacitus, the Roman historian, mentions Him in his "Annals,"[2] as also Pliny in one of his Letters.[3] In Suetonius's "Life of Claudius"[4] there is perhaps a reference. The Talmud has constant allusions to Him, marked by intense hatred. Though the writers of the Talmud are uncritical and irresponsible, their writings have historical value. Christ is called "That man," "He whom we may not name," "The fool," "Absalom," and other such epithets. All these references and allusions make clear, from sources foreign to Christianity, that Christ is an historic character.

[1] xx. 9, 1; and possibly also xviii. 3, 3. See Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. v. p. 472.

[2] xv. 44. [3] x. 96. [4] xxv.

II. *The Fathers*

We commonly call the Early Christian writers, following New Testament times, *The Fathers*. Their quotations from the Gospels often help scholars to fix upon the exact text of the Gospel manuscripts. But, more than that, fragmentary as their writings are for the most part, they are the sources from which the history of the Post-Apostolic Church is made. This history must often decide the meaning of a Gospel passage. For example, Professor McGiffert, in his "Apostolic Age,"[1] arguing from the slight emphasis in the Gospels upon Christ's injunction to perpetuate the Lord's Supper, thinks it extremely doubtful whether Christ intended His disciples to continue the feast as an institution; yet he says plainly[2] that "there can be no doubt that it was everywhere celebrated in the churches of the apostolic age." The Epistles assure us of this; and the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Fathers confirm it. Condensed documents like the Gospels get their certain meaning from the contemporary and subsequent history of which they were part.[3] They were part of a living stream. What men tried to do in Christ's name is the best evidence of what Christ commanded. The Fathers show the established customs of the Christian community.

[1] pp. 68, 69. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 536.

[3] *Cf.* Abbé Alfred Loisy ("The Gospel and the Church," tr. C. Home, p. 13): "Christ is inseparable from His work, and the attempt to define the essence of Christianity according to the pure Gospel of Jesus apart from tradition cannot suceed; . . . for the essence of Christianity must be in the work of Jesus, or nowhere, and would be vainly sought in scattered fragments of His discourse."

The tendency grew, — as one sees from even a rapid reading of the Fathers, — to draw inferences from the facts of Christ's Life. St. Paul began to explain: it was inevitable that thinking men should go on explaining. Ignatius devotes himself to passages on the Virgin-Birth, the pre-existence of Christ, the Incarnation; Clement of Rome also speaks of pre-existence and vaguely implies the Trinity; in the middle of the second century there begins an effort to describe the relation of the Son to the Father; and by the end of the second century Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria have practically founded what we call Christian theology, — that is, the deductions from the facts recorded in the Gospels are being moulded into a science.

It was altogether natural that in this process of thought some of the Fathers should make wild deductions. So the Gnostics, the Ebionites, and many other exaggerating writers distorted the Gospel story through neglecting its wholeness by an over-fondness for a particular part. But even the heresies are instructive. They show great truths of Christ shorn of their complementary truths.

Thus the Fathers bear witness to Christ. Their story confirms the Gospels; and it attempts to translate a story which first appealed to the heart into such terms that it may appeal to the mind.

III. *Councils and Creeds*

The climax of the work of the Fathers was their united wisdom as shown in the interpretations of General Councils, formulated at length into the Creeds.

The strife and bitterness of the Councils, the delight in branding men as heretics, must not blind one to the profound learning and power of lucid thinking which the Greek Fathers especially displayed in these deliberations of the great Councils. Greek thinking welded to the matchless clearness of the Greek language gave the opportunity to explain, — as far as human wit, under divine guidance, can explain, — the person of Christ in terms of mind. Kattenbusch,[1] Harnack,[2] and McGiffert,[3] would place the original form of the Apostles' Creed somewhere between A.D 100 and 175, and agree that it was first set forth in Rome as the local Baptismal Symbol; from this original form it grew to our present Apostles' Creed by slow stages. Whether it was the foundation of the Nicene Creed is an open question. At any rate, our so-called Nicene Creed is the Apostles' Creed in, as has been said, "one of its more florid Oriental forms." The Nicene Creed (A.D. 325–381) was meant to meet the heresies of Arius and Macedonius. Dr. Sanday in his sane way[4] pleads for the importance of these ancient decisions: "Every word in them," he says, "represents a battle, or series of battles, in which the combatants were, many of them, giants."

The strength of the Councils is that they were not afraid of a paradox. The Godhead is Trinity in Unity; Christ is human and divine; The Father is greater than The Son, and The Father and The Son are equal. It was the genius of the Greek mind which dared to

[1] "Das apostolische Symbol." [2] "Das apostolische Glaubensbekenntniss." [3] "The Apostles' Creed."

[4] Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. ii. p. 650.

go as far as the Truth demanded on any single line, and to leave ultimate consistency with God. When the Latin mind at length went into the business of holding councils it was another story: the petty effort to describe in hard Latin words what needed delicate appreciation rather than description marks the dreary road from the master, Athanasius, to the limited thinker, Augustine. But, in spite of differences in perception and capacity, the men who moved Councils were working out the problem of Christ's personality. Everything they had in gifts, human or divine, went out in the effort to understand Him, and to explain Him to the world. It is crass ignorance of all life to complain that it is a far cry from the glowing simplicity of St. Mark to the elaborate and cold diction of the Creeds. It is exactly the difference between touching, seeing, smelling a flower and reading its technical description in a botany. The little would-be poet scorns the botany. The great poet — Tennyson [1] for one striking example — takes infinite pains to know the scientific lore about the beautiful nature which first he drinks in with his senses and emotions. So the poet, most sagacious of men, comes to *know*. He who would know Christ may expect much help from a study of Creeds and Councils. They reveal Christ as He touched the composite mind of the early ages.

IV. *Institutions*

An institution — if it deserves the name — is a conserver of principles, traditions, truth. A university, for example, just in so far as it has a history

[1] Life, vol. ii. p. 408.

behind it, presents to each generation of students essentially the same ideals. The methods of teaching may change, the subjects for study may be revolutionised, but the main characteristics of the graduates of the university will be the same. Thus one feels the difference between an Oxford man and a Cambridge man; or, in our own land, between a Harvard man and a Yale man. It is a subtle but distinct savour which the great institution invariably gives to its children. Knowing the present generation within the college walls, you know alumni of two or five centuries ago. An ancient story has come down through them to our life to-day.

So the Christian Church, bound together by one fixed enthusiasm in all ages — an enthusiasm for Christ — is an eloquent witness to the personality of Christ. A little later I shall speak of the interior character of Christians as a demonstration of Christ's character, but for this chapter I wish to cling to the outward features of the institution of the Christian Church.

(*a*) THE SACRAMENTS

The Sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper are witnesses to the life of Christ. Interpretations of the meaning of these Sacraments have varied from age to age. To some extent the mode of their administration has varied; but there have been at the basis of both a rite and a form of words which have been counted essential to their validity. The Baptism is to be with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. The Lord's Supper is to be with bread and wine, accompanied

with a recitation of the Saviour's words of institution. The Lord's Supper, especially in its memorial aspect, is a vivid recalling of a significant event in Christ's life, and thereby, through the continuing practice of the Church, has become perhaps the most striking testimony to the event itself, to the death of Christ as a love-manifesting and life-producing phenomenon. For times have been periodically when men did not study, did not listen to instructions and sermons, were careless of the Scriptures, ignored all learned writings, but kept on receiving this Feast instituted by Christ. In her last story,[1] Mrs. Humphrey Ward makes a character, who is more or less confused by the destructive criticism, tell her reason for standing fast by the ancient Sacrament. "It's an *Action*," the heroine says, — "not words. . . . Some day we shall all be tired — shan't we? — of creeds and sermons, but never of 'This *do*, in remembrance of Me!'" For various reasons, all down the years, there have been periods when men who knew too many things, or too few, have been "tired of creeds and sermons," but still they have been impelled to obey the bidding of the outward and visible act of loyalty to the Christ.

Thus the Sacraments have borne a steady witness to Christ when Gospel records lay hid in libraries unread, or when men, taking the records out, scoffed at their validity. The unbroken custom of definite acts in Christ's name assures us to-day of the intense reality which started such acts into history.

[1] "Fenwick's Career," Chapter VII.

(*b*) THE MINISTRY

Branches of the Christian Church which can be called "historic" place emphasis on the historic continuity of the ministry from the beginning. No theory of the ministry and its functions need be discussed. The obvious word need only be that an historic, continuous ministry has large value as a witness-bearing institution. We read that when the Eleven Apostles sought to fill the vacancy in the "Twelve" caused by the suicide of Judas, the one qualification in the candidates was that they must have been eye-witnesses of the Risen Christ. Clearly, then, we grasp that the Apostles were to be "witnesses of the Resurrection." To their successors in office they committed this witness, sealing the truth of their testimony, most often, by death. The regularly appointed officers to whom they committed this trust "ordained" others in turn, committing to them the witness they had received in their day; and so the chain of testimony was started and continued. The exact way in which the orders of the ministry evolved, the names used, the way the bishops succeeded to the leadership at first exercised by the Apostles, must not tangle us. The only point for us now to fix upon is that a regular succession of duly appointed and accredited officers passed on from generation to generation the honest witness of the Apostles to the life of Christ.

Irenæus died after A.D. 200 — that is 170 years after Christ's vanishing from earth. In his graphic way Irenæus says[1] that he could point out the exact

[1] Letter to Florinus.

spot in Asia Minor where Polycarp talked to him about interviews which Polycarp held with St. John and others who had seen Christ. This makes one feel what the links of living witnesses mean, how they become independent of any written record, and how they bear a living share in any estimate of facts. "These are priceless words," says the candid Harnack,[1] "for they establish a chain of evidence (Jesus, John, Polycarp, Irenæus) which is without a parallel in history."

It will be noted that Polycarp and Irenæus were Bishops — officers of the Church pledged to pass on an accurate account of what they had received. Such testimony has value when the testimony is given by private individuals; it has increased weight when given by officials, appointed, among other reasons, to keep exactly and to pass on with strictest care what has been committed to them.

It may fairly be admitted that the officials might weave certain theories among the received facts, and in passing forward the facts might add as facts what were originally only theories. This is quite possible, and in individual instances doubtless occurred; but with the ever-widening stream it would be increasingly difficult to get a general consensus on the theories, while the facts would have a universality which would distinguish them from the alloy and accretions. For this reason, the appeal has been made, from time to time, to the primitive records and they have corrected much that is thus proved modern growth; but the *facts* of Christ's life have had a singularly uniform

[1] Encyclopædia Britannica, art. "Polycarp."

testimony from records and ministry. The ministry of to-day, with its continuous history reaching back to the remote past, has therefore independent authority in sustaining the accuracy of the events recorded in the New Testament.

(*c*) SUNDAY

The keeping of Sunday as a day of rest and worship dates from apostolic times. For a time the Jewish Christians kept both the Sabbath and Sunday, but by the end of the first century Sunday was kept exclusively. By the beginning of the fourth century the Church was hallowing Sunday, under definite ecclesiastical law, and Constantine made this Church law a state law also. It is somewhat difficult to understand how enormous a change, for a Jewish mind, was implied in yielding the Sabbath to any other day of the week. The disciples, with sacred associations of Sabbaths spent with Christ, would be as tenacious as any other Jews in maintaining the preëminence of the Sabbath. Only an event of overwhelming importance could turn them from their sacred traditions and associations, especially, as we find, by such common and universal consent. The only event which has ever been suggested as the cause of this change from the Sabbath to Sunday is the Resurrection on Sunday of our Lord. That does explain it: nothing else does.

Therefore, Sunday falls in among the institutions which bear witness, independent of documents, upon Christ's Life. It is one of the supreme evidences of His Resurrection as an historical fact, and further

testifies to the character of the Risen One, — for even a Resurrection alone is insufficient to account for a universal custom, striking at deep-seated convictions and prejudices: the Resurrection must have been the Resurrection of One who spoke and lived with power.

(*d*) THE CHURCH AS AN INTERPRETER OF SCRIPTURES AND CREEDS

We often hear people say, "The Church teaches thus and so." When asked what is meant by the "Church," or how the Church has taught what it is alleged to have taught, men give widely different answers. Some point to the New Testament; some to the decisions of the Six Ecumenical Councils; some, to the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds; some, to the Augsburg Confession; some, to the Decrees of Trent; some, to the Thirty-nine Articles; but most men speak vaguely, attempting to confirm their own convictions by an appeal to what they, at any rate, *wish* the Church to teach. For such a purpose any ancient Churchman is apt to be sufficient if his dictum is decidedly approving the quoter's point of view.

The natural and apparently easy solution is to say that the Church teaches what the original documents (Holy Scriptures) imply and what the Creeds bring together as essential inferences from these original documents. The difficulty, however, is that no form of words can ever mean quite the same to succeeding ages. The Scriptures and the Creeds are in constant need of interpreters. The Church by a divine commission is a living organism, not a dead shell to contain so-called deposits: Christ promised His followers

that the Holy Spirit should guide them into all truth. The relationship of the Church to the Bible and the Creeds is therefore a vital one. The good commentator feels himself under obligation to know what leaders of Church thought in all ages have declared to be the meaning of the text on which he is working. New discoveries in Palestinian or Egyptian soil, newly discovered manuscripts of undoubted antiquity, may discount the interpretation of all of them; but, as a scientific scholar, he dare not disregard this interpretation of the past. It is a necessary contribution to a sane judgment. This is, within narrower bounds, true also of the Creeds. Discoveries in astronomy have entirely changed the conception of the word "ascended" in the Creed. "The resurrection of the body" has had a different content in different ages: in spite of St. Paul's discourse on the spiritual body, there have been periods when men have been more orthodox than the orthodox, and have declared that the Creed means, in the case of our resurrection, a revivifying of the exact particles of matter which have gone into the grave. I suppose no intelligent person believes that to-day. In any case the Creed is not putting its approval upon any such detail of interpretation, but upon the great general principle of the resurrection of that part of ourselves which causes us to be known and recognised by our neighbours: God will give the kind of body that pleases Him in His own time.[1] It is quite certain that, with our fuller

[1] It need not be pointed out that our Lord's Resurrection falls under an entirely different category, since His body "did not see corruption."

knowledge of the natural world, with the centuries of Christian experience, with the memory of saints and clear thinkers, the Creeds are richer, stored with larger, more definite meaning than they had for the Christians of the first few centuries. The doctrine of evolution alone has made the clause, "Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible," pulsate with a meaning it never could have had for the Bishops at Nicæa. Dimly still, but with inspiring flashes, we see the glorious method of the Creating Father, — creating continuously, never ceasing His care or (remembering the interpretation through Christ) His love.

There need never be any consternation at this indwelling right of the Church to interpret. By a divine Providence the times of Ecumenical Councils are probably past. The Church of to-day is divided and the pronouncement of the Ecumenical Council is now replaced by what we may call the common consent of Christendom. For example, though the fathers and brethren sixty years ago railed at the theory of Evolution,[1] Christian people everywhere accept it as a solid witness to the theological doctrine of design: if an Ecumenical Council could be held to-morrow, and its members were asked to affirm or reject the doctrine of evolution, doubtless they would affirm the "hypothesis" with substantial unanimity; those who voted against its credibility would be stared at as men who could not think. People are no longer either writing or reading books on the Harmonising of Science

[1] *Cf.* "Life and Letters of Thomas H. Huxley," vol. i. pp. 194 ff., for an account of Bishop Wilberforce's strange attacks.

and Religion; because the Church, quietly, guided by the Spirit of God, has gratefully appropriated the honest temper of scientific investigation as its own. The Church does speak, not through a definite council, but through the myriad voices of many children, happily at last agreed upon some change in attitude or upon some added detail of belief. These changes are additions, rarely if ever subtractions. It is a mark of the Church to construct, — howbeit slowly, conservatively, cautiously.

Lest one feel that this makes the documents of Christianity — the New Testament and the Creeds — of unstable value, it is wise to notice that the changes are slight. The passage referring to the three witnesses in St. John's Epistles has been dropped out by general consent, but the doctrine of the Trinity is not thereby weakened. Even if the Fathers did refer to it as a proof text, we no longer are convinced of the truth by isolated texts: we have higher, firmer ground for belief in the Trinity, — in the spirit of the whole New Testament, in the irresistible interpretation of the Early Church. So too, when the content of the word "ascended" in the Creeds was changed by the discoveries of Copernicus, sane men saw that the detail was too insignificant to notice. The popular language of the day was used to define an event, whose meaning, to faith and practical life, was not at all impaired.

Our purpose confines us to the facts of Christ's Life. The Church's authority on the validity of these facts is a highly important testimony. To men like Cardinal Newman the Church is infallible, and what

is set forth by the Church is a closed question. Most people, whether they admit it or not, whether they even know it or not, do not accept authority simply because it is authority; nothing which must pass through human media is in itself counted infallible. As some one has pointed out, the dead rich man who asked Abraham to send infallible witnesses to his five brethren, still living, was in torment: the cry for infallibility [1] is from hell. But though men generally will not accept *ipso facto* what the Church sets forth, they will give especial weight to what the Church has attested.[2] The Gospels, the Creeds, have immense

[1] *Cf.* The Bishop of Ripon's "Witness to the Influence of Christ;" pp. 152 ff. "The wish for certitude may be a very noble or a very cowardly wish. It may be noble . . . if it spring from the passionate desire for truth. . . . But the wish for certitude is often an unworthy one; it may spring, not from the imperious love of truth, but from the ignoble love of ease, or from the cowardly wish to escape responsibility, and so to shirk one of God's current ways of discipline. . . . The unhealthy craving for authority, which in some times and places has been so frequent, is a symptom of this slothful disposition and this discreditable timidity. Such a wish can never be finally satisfied under present conditions. . . . We are surrounded by mystery, whether we look without us or within. We know only in part, and certitude therefore, in any absolute or complete sense, must be looked for only when we reach that realm where we shall know even as also we are known."

[2] *Cf.* Abbé Loisy ("The Gospel and the Church," tr. C. Home, p. 224, p. 217): "The Church does not exact belief in its formulas as the adequate expression of absolute truth, but presents them as the least imperfect expression that is morally possible; she demands that men respect them for their quality, seek the faith in them, and use them to transmit it. The ecclesiastical formula is the auxiliary of faith . . .: it cannot be the integral object of that thought, seeing that object is God Himself, Christ and His Work; each man lays

force toward persuading a reasonable man because the Church from the beginning has given its continuous authority to them. What changes of interpretation have come in all the years have been insignificant, both relatively and absolutely. In the days of councils, one council affirmed what a previous council had denied. To-day, men, seeming to find difficulties, groan because the Church does not rise instantly to omit or deny what seems to them an outworn word or phrase. The process of adjustment to conditions must be slower now than in the early time. And happy for us that it is so. The myriad voices sounding from different climes, from separated sections of Christendom, will bring back at last a vote, and it will bring a conviction that no council ever had. The Church, through interpretation of Scripture and Creeds, stands staunchly as a witness to the recorded events in Christ's Life. The doubts of one age melt into the faith of the next; and men rejoice that there has been no "revision" of the ancient Creeds. They are justified.

A good many people are questioning that article of the Creed which is summed up under the name of the Virgin Birth. They are wondering if it may not sometime drop out of the Creed, by the common consent of the Church. This question needs to be answered calmly; yet few who touch upon it have patience. To those who find it a stumbling-block, it

hold of the object as He can with the aid of the formula. . . . Truth alone is unchangeable, but not its image in our minds. Faith addresses itself to the unchangeable truth, through a formula necessarily inadequate."

needs to be said that their difficulties with the account in St. Luke are, to a very large extent, academic. The argument from silence, always weak, is, in such a subject, superficial to the last degree: therefore the silence of St. Mark and St. John must not rouse suspicion. That the Lord should have been *called* Joseph's Son is most natural, and the record that He was so called is witness to the trustworthiness of the documents. Contradictions and inconsistencies are part of real life: only the theoretic and unreal can smooth out the wrinkles. In this same way the two sets of genealogies have an explanation[1] for their place in the records. To begin with antecedent improbability and to argue from it against any well-authenticated fact in such a unique Life is unscientific, as the impartial Huxley has pointed out once for all; and it must be confessed that antecedent improbability is the main motive and support of those who argue against the fact.[2] It is both loyalty to Church and loyalty to

[1] See Sanday's interesting explanation, article, "Jesus Christ," Hastings's Dictionary, vol. ii. p. 645. Ramsay's "Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?" is perhaps the most important contribution to the whole subject.

[2] See, for example, Professor Schmiedel's article on "Mary," in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. This is a sweeping denial of the whole incident, but the candid reader is conscious at every turn that history, Biblical criticism, philosophy, and theology are mercilessly bent to fit the author's hypothesis. One feels how easily the constructive critic could use the very same materials, by the very same method, in defence of the tradition. For example, the heathen tradition that Virgin Birth is the means of divine contact with humanity might be interpreted as a necessary idea, relentlessly besieging the human mind till the necessity was fulfilled in the Incarnation. I have not spoken of the recently discovered Sinaitic Syriac text which makes

reason which makes a man say, without twisting of words or reservation of thought, "He was born of a Virgin."

On the other hand, it is possible that those who accept the fact of the Virgin Birth have erred in giving it a place beyond its divine meaning, and by making it alone carry the great doctrine of the Incarnation have aggravated the doubt of those who are troubled with the accounts as history. In other words, it may be that the fact has suffered as much from those who believe it as from those who discredit it. For it is becoming plain from recent investigation that the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Church did not build their faith in Christ's Divinity upon this detail of the Incarnation.[1] I do not mean that they ignored it; they simply did not emphasise it, and the greatest of theologians, St. Paul, did not refer to it,[2] though no one believed more thoroughly in the Divinity of

St. Matt. i. 16 to read: "Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the Virgin, begat Jesus." Even Dr. Schmiedel admits that such a reading might come from an Ebionite hand (p. 2963); and one smiles as one thinks how quickly Dr. Schmiedel would put the reading beneath his foot if it interfered with his hypothesis. The "Dialogue of Timoth and Aquila," quoted by Dr. Schmiedel (p. 2961), — from *Anecd. Oxon. Class.* ser. 8, 1898, p. 76, — shows clearly that the reading "Joseph begat Jesus" was not uncommon. But when there was, as all historians know, an Ebionite party in the church holding such a "theory," it is not at all difficult to explain how the texts came to be tampered with. For the use of critical material in defence of the canonical text see Principal W. F. Adeney's "Virgin Birth and the Divinity of Christ" (Essays for the Times, No. 11), pp. 22–27.

[1] *Vide e.g.*, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, lxxx.

[2] He may perhaps be said to *allude* to it in such passages as 1 Cor. xv. 47.

our Lord. The kernel of the Apostles' Creed, — known as the Roman Symbol, — when we catch a glimpse of it in Irenæas[1] and Tertullian,[2] states its belief "in Christ Jesus his Son, who was born of Mary the Virgin." The reason for the insertion of Mary's name was not because she was a Virgin, scholars agree,[3] but because she was a woman: the Creed was formulated to meet the heresy of those who believed that our Lord was divine, but was not human. For the Creed goes on after the word Virgin: was "crucified under Pontius Pilate *and buried.*" In so very brief a Creed, to add the word "buried" seems a superfluity, until you remember that the Saviour's subjection to human conditions was being denied. This creed, then, did imply the Virgin Birth, but the accent was on the humanity, the commonness of it, rather than on the divinity, the uniqueness. Moreover, when later the divinity, in the Nicene sense, came in question, the Apostles' Creed added only "of the Holy Spirit" after "Christ Jesus"; and the Nicene Symbol, set forth preëminently to meet any diminution of our Saviour's divine dignity, contained one clear and delicate phrase after another asserting this divinity, but, in its original form, did not even name the Virgin Mother, and, in its later forms, did not emphasise further the importance of the Virgin Birth than by its briefest assertion.

The historic witness to the fact is, in an impartial effort to grasp the truth, sufficient. Passing over our

[1] "Adv. Haer." iii. 4: 2; iii. 16: 5, etc.

[2] "De Virginibus Velandis," 1, etc.

[3] *Vide* McGiffert's "Apostles' Creed," p. 7; pp. 91 ff.

allegiance to the Creeds and weighing all the arguments on their own merits, I feel sure that it is more "scientific" to accept the fact than to reject it; for the witness of documents like St. Matthew and St. Luke[1] and the Roman Symbol (with the attestation of the "reliable Irenæus") is not easily explained away.[2] But the excited outbursts of some, that if you reject this mode of Incarnation you reject our Lord's full divinity, is little short of wild. I shall, on a later page,[3] speak of the high significance of this unique Birth; but even if one could conceive that a document

[1] Professor B. W. Bacon, an unfriendly critic, says distinctly: "No success whatever has attended the many efforts to eliminate the supernatural birth from the canonical Matthew and Luke as belonging to the canonical authors." (Am. Jour. Theol., Jan. 1906, p. 8.) Professor C. A. Briggs is equally pronounced in this conviction. (N. A. Review, June, 1906, p. 863.)

[2] The testimony of Ignatius at the beginning of the second century is important because he speaks of the Virgin Birth when attacking the *docetism* of his time. "He was," says Ignatius ("Ad. Smyr." I. i.), "truly born of a virgin, was baptized by John, . . . was truly . . . nailed [to the cross] for us in His flesh." It will be seen that the whole emphasis is here on the reality of Christ's humanity; so that had not the Virgin Birth been an undisputed fact, universally received, Ignatius would not thus casually have mentioned it. Since Ignatius, in the spirit of his writings, is close to the point of view of the Pauline Epistles and the Fourth Gospel, and rather removed from the Synoptic point of view, his testimony is the more important.

Of course, the fact that the early form of the Apostles' Creed, known as the Roman Symbol, was set forth to meet *docetism* gives an added emphasis to the mention of the Virgin Birth. It was a fact which, of itself, could be employed by docetists; and therefore its acceptance was assured, else no creed set forth for an anti-docetic purpose would have contained it.

[3] Chapter XVII, Section III.

written by St. John *might* be found to-morrow which would disprove the Virgin Birth *in toto*, yet the faith of staunch believers in Christ's Divinity would still be untouched. It is wholly improbable, but it can at least be imagined as possible, that St. John might have written down words from the lips of our Lord's Mother, denying the report as we have it in St. Luke. Improbable, I say, because St. John would surely have had opportunity to deny such reports in his Gospel had he wished so to do[1]: the very imagining it makes one feel the strength of the history. We may even go so far as to say that it is historically impossible. But even if it *could* be imagined that we might some day hear the startling news, the Church could recall that, though the fact had formerly been accepted as historic, the Divinity, the Character, of Christ had not, in the great authoritative documents, been built upon it. St. Paul — the best mind of the Church — and St. John — the truest heart of the Church — did not build on

[1] Even adverse critics admit that the account was current in the last three decades of the first century. Bacon says that it came from one of two sources: the Virgin herself, or from a Pauline development (Am. Jour. Theol., 1906, p. 9). So St. John (or the author of the Fourth Gospel) must have known it. Ramsay ("Was Christ Born in Bethlehem?") ingeniously works out the problem, from whom St. Luke received the account. He is sure that St. Luke *implies* that he received it from the Virgin (p. 74). This may have been by oral communication, about 57 or 58 A.D., or by talking with some one who had been very intimate with her, — if so, this "some one" was a woman: "There is a womanly spirit in the whole narrative" (p. 88). Ramsay gives excellent reasons why the Virgin would have been unlikely to make the fact public earlier (p. 76).

it.[1] The Creeds use it as historic, but as an historic incident — it is the antiphony to which the response is, "and was made man." The Church is stable, abiding by facts, not theories; but even among facts the Church discriminates. Heresy consists in being *too* orthodox on one detail of the faith, to the exclusion of other details. To fall into a panic, to rush to exaggeration, because some men, bearing the high name of scholars, dare to question this fact, is, first, unsound churchmanship, and is, afterward, the best way to perpetuate a warped historical judgment in those whom one would convince of the fidelity of the Gospel narrative.

I am aware that this will seem to be a mere quibble. If, it may be urged, you deem the historic fact of the Virgin Birth of Christ established, why do you not allow men to put any emphasis they please upon it. There are two excellent reasons. First, theology is a most delicate historical science. He who is unwilling to distinguish and measure and weigh, with scrupulous care, has no right to meddle with it. To over-emphasise an article of belief, because some men minimise or seek to omit it, is dangerous for men's acceptance of truth, whether you call it orthodoxy or fact. Therefore the second reason for exact distinctions in the emphasis you shall give to certain facts is that very many of the doubts and denials of history may be traced to the wrong emphasis which conventional, but unthoughtful, Christians have placed upon details — all of which are true as facts. The keen

[1] This does not mean that they do not allude to it. They never distinctly *refer* to it, however.

outsider *feels* that something is wrong, exaggerated, out of place: he may have neither will nor ability to investigate; so over goes the whole fact, — rejected because overloaded with meaning.

The Church, by indwelling Light, has borne ample witness to the Scriptures and the Creed; and the vital facts of Christ's Life must, to the judicial mind, seem assured beyond all peradventure. The authority of the Church, — hard to define, but real, — has added to the material from which we know the fulness of our Saviour's Life and Character.

CHAPTER IV

The Present Witness

THE evidence of Christ's character in the records of the past is abundant, but we know Him also through present witnesses.

I. *The Inheritance of Imitation*

I have already referred to the startling links binding the people who lived in A.D. 200 with the Person of Christ. Irenæus was wont to tell how vividly he remembered the words of Polycarp, as he described what the Apostle John had told him of Jesus. In the same way, beginning with Irenæus, one might select a comparatively short list of names which would complete the chain of witnesses down to our own day. But all this is outward testimony; and, though important, is not the most important testimony which this living succession may provide. St. John, for example, from close companionship with the Lord, had incorporated into his character characteristics of Christ. Polycarp, knowing St. John, and finding Christ in him, caught up the Christ-nature which he found there, and made it his own. Irenæus in the same way found traits which he recognised as Christ's in his master Polycarp, and straightway built them

into his life. So all down the ages, men have been receiving from their elders and betters the character of Christ, preserved in the hearts and lives of His followers, by a living chain of inheritance. This is the truest form of Apostolic Succession; for, though subtle and difficult to explain, it does make Christ very real to the men of our generation.[1]

In a practical way, we are always saying of this trait and that, as we observe it in a man or a woman, "That is Christ-like." It is of course possible that from study of the brief Gospel records one has absorbed the beautiful characteristic; but it is more usual that one has seen another Christian man or woman do an act which inspires one, and forces, by a divine compulsion, unconscious imitation. The ancient record may confirm the unconscious imitation and make it a habit. It rarely starts it.

We see the distinction the moment we try to imagine an unscrupulous merchant who should give a heathen Chinaman a New Testament. The Chinaman would be repelled by the giver's character so far that he would not be impressed by the splendour of the Life recorded in the book. The Christian Church takes care to send to un-Christian countries not, first

[1] *Cf.* Dr. A. V. G. Allen's "Christian Institutions," p. 4: "It is a characteristic of the present age that it finds its surest apology for the Christian faith, not only in the appeal which that faith still makes to the soul, but also in the fact that God has never left Himself without a witness in the past, that there has been an unbroken succession of the sons of God in every generation, who have borne witness to the power of His Word, handing on to those who follow the torch of light and truth amid the surrounding darkness, until humanity should step forth into the fuller day."

of all, books, but people — people who have Christ in them. Then, when the poor sufferer has found out the skill and care of the Christian physician, or the sympathy of the Christian clergyman, or the love and tenderness of the Christian woman — then he begins to know Christ, and he is glad to read a book which will describe the history of the Man whose character has given to these three so-called Christian people common characteristics as they hover over his pain and sorrow, and, like angels of mercy, seek to bring him health and peace.

So, important as outward testimony must always be for the reasoning soul, the inward, silent testimony of Christ-like men and women, inheriting Christ through all the centuries, must be an even greater bulwark toward a full knowledge of Him. For the character so displayed gets hold of the heart, and brings the whole nature of a man to the feet of Christ. And one more seeks to live as Christ lived, and to copy the trait so wonderfully preserved in the flesh and blood of an endless Christianity.

It was, I think, the late Dean Farrar who once pointed out that this sort of knowledge of Christ is like the numerous copies of Da Vinci's Last Supper. Just as the historic Christ is far away and grown dim and unreal to many men, so the original painting of the Last Supper on the monastery walls is dim, almost invisible. But the picture was recognised as great at once, and men began to copy it. Copies were scattered over Europe; then copies of these copies were made. Meantime the original picture faded; and the fading has continued, till now men can barely

see it. Yet the picture is not gone. Men wishing to know what Da Vinci did, go from gallery to gallery in Europe and gaze at copy after copy. No one copy tells all; but from studying many copies, one gets an almost complete idea of the original picture. One painter has caught one virtue of the picture; another, another; and so on, down the various efforts to reproduce it, — till their sum brings you wonderfully close to Da Vinci. Thus — we dare to believe — as we know the living copies of Christ to-day, we see "broken lights" of Him — one showing an intuition of sympathy; another, a deft kindness; another, a magnetic attraction — all fragments — but when added together they make us almost *see* Christ. He is to us no far-off historical person merely; He is right at hand: He is *in* the humanity which we know and love

II. *The Immediate Christ To-day*

I come now to the most vital of all considerations, Does Christ make Himself known directly to men to-day? And then there is something further: if He does make men conscious of Himself as a present reality, can those men who have the wonderful experience transmute it into valid evidence for men who have not had anything to correspond with it? The questions rouse the suspicion of mysticism and make the practical man feel that there is danger that one will say what one imagines or only wishes to be so. Great care is needed to be as simple and honest as possible.

What we know of God in general would, in the first

place, lead us to expect that Christ—God manifest in the world—should speak directly to the individual life. We believe, for example, that God made this world because He wished a larger field for His love. We know, by our Lord's words, that God wishes us to be not His servants, but His friends: that implies that He wishes us to love Him. But St. John tells us that the only reason we can love God is because God has first loved us,—not men in the mass, but individuals; for does not the Gospel assure us that not a sparrow falls to the ground but God cares? Therefore it cannot be rash to say that God loves the individual life.

The question now arises, how God expresses His love for the individual. The mechanical Christian is apt to say that God has sufficiently revealed His love for the individual by giving him certain outward tokens. He has given him, for instance, the document which contains the revelation of our Saviour's Love; He has given him Church history, which records God's guidance of the race; He has given him also the pledge of His constant Love in the Christian Sacraments. That these outward expressions of God's Love are precious beyond telling we all gladly confess. The vigorous contention must be that, in so far as they remain outward symbols only, they do not tell the whole story.

No child, for example, would say that because his father fed him and clothed him, therefore his father loved him. The child takes these outward manifestations of a father's love for granted. Were he asked why his father loved him, he might instinctively

recall the sweetness of his father's smile, the tenderness of his touch, the gentleness of his voice; but he would probably say that he could not tell why he believed that his father loved him. He would be sure, however, that his father did love him. There would be the feeling of an indescribable something binding his life to his father's — something so delicate, so invisible, so intangible, that their lives touched, were fused, were one life.

Nor need we rely only on the testimony of childhood. The philosopher says frankly, "There is a region in life which I cannot describe." Herbert Spencer, one remembers, calls it the region of the Unknowable; the sound philosopher of to-day calls it the region of the appreciable. No one can tell what death is; but if you have lost your beloved, then you know death. No one can tell what love is; but when a great-souled friend comes and pours his life into your life, then you know love. Love can send out its symbols into space; but, at the last, love, to be love, must make itself felt. It must touch the life which it loves; it must enter into the soul of its beloved and be lost there. Love craves complete expression.

See, then, to what this brings us. Since God loves the world, as He certainly does love it, how can we think of His being content to love it with outward symbols only? Will He at least not compete with His human children in trying to pour into their lives all His life? Will He who was incarnate in Jesus nineteen centuries ago not be manifest in this same Jesus to-day? Will not this same Jesus — however mystically, yet really — appear to men in our age so

that a man here and there shall rise up to say, "I have seen the love of Christ face to face, and I know by individual, personal experience that God loves me. I know the Christ."

But, however logical this may all be, it is still theoretical. We must find men in our own day who by definite acts give us reason to believe that they have really known the present, living Christ. Fortunately the news of the hour gives us a conspicuous and convincing example. A college professor, reared from babyhood in Unitarianism, has recently, to use his own words, been led to accept Christ. Lest I read too much into his words, let the words themselves be quoted: —

"The call of Christ I conceive to be that time in a man's life when an impulse comes to surrender everything for Christ. We all come to a place in our lives when we feel that there is something lacking in our life, and Christ speaks to us in that still, small voice, and if we accept Him, He brings us into the new life. That is what is meant by hearing the call and giving ourselves to Christ.

"Personally, I had no expectation that the call of Christ would come to me. I think most of you here who know me personally will agree with me that I was not the man you would have expected to confess Christ here in this meeting-house. If you will pardon these personal references, I will give a few reasons why. I am of New England birth, and a New Englander is not apt to be carried away by anything emotional. I am a man of books, of an intellectual life, associated constantly with students, and such

men do not take such steps under enthusiasm. Most of you are aware of the fact that I was a Unitarian, and that they are known as a sect which lays more stress on reason and intellect than on the heart. Who would have thought that I would have been led to accept Christ in a revival meeting in a Methodist church?

"By my personal experience I can say that the way to the cross is through prayer. The first sermon preached here by Dr. Dawson was one on prayer, and it was almost by accident that I happened to go. I only thought of hearing an excellent preacher. I did not find much I had not thought of before; but I said, What he says is sensible, and I will try it; and as I walked down from church that day I prayed that God would give me the best He had for me. Monday came, and I gave myself to the ordinary duties of the week. I did not go to hear Dr. Dawson at once again. It was not until Thursday night that I came to this meeting-house; but during that time I continued this express prayer, and I must admit with a little more interest than usual. I went to hear Dr. Dawson again on Friday, Sunday, and Monday, and during this time I became conscious of a curious change which was going on in myself, which I did not, and cannot now, explain. Many things which had been much to me — indeed, all — had ceased to interest me. Interest in life began to have a curious dulness in regard to some things; I do not mean in the carrying on of my regular college duties, but in art, literature, nature, etc. I began to have a greater love for humanity in general.

"On Thursday night he preached on the Delusions of this Life; on Friday night he preached on the Visit of Nicodemus to Jesus by Night; on Sunday night he preached on the text of the burning bush and how it was not consumed by the fire; on Monday night he preached on the Greeks who came saying, 'We would see Jesus,' and he said that they found not a poet, not a philosopher, not a leader of the people, but One whose life had been a constant sacrifice for the salvation of the world. Then it was on invitation of my friend, Dr. Adams — whom I shall never forget in that respect — I made the decision to follow Christ. I said: 'I am a sinner. I am resolved to surrender and take up the spiritual ministry of Christ.' The call of the cross is not merely a call to forgiveness, but a call to love and work for Christ, He has said: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

"I think there is still something for those who come at the eleventh hour. If we have the spirit and love of Christ, we will serve Him in every word and act of our lives."[1]

See the full force of this testimony. It is from a man who has been taught from his boyhood to be strictly true to facts. Religion has been largely moral precepts: Christ has been followed as a Great Teacher who died nineteen centuries ago, and is still dead. All that a noble father, high character, diligent study could do to make this outward impersonal system

[1] Edward Everett Hale, Jr., Professor of Rhetoric at Union College, Schenectady.

satisfactory was given. This man of ideals and intellect never expected to hear the voice of the living Christ: yet one day a few weeks ago he heard Him speak "in that still small voice" of authority. He heard Him so unmistakably that he turned his whole life upside down to obey. No one can read the words of this sincere man, whose business is to weigh words, without being sure that Christ displays His character to the men of this generation.

Why have we a right to put confidence in such an experience? Professor James, in his truly great book on *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* masses a large number of individual experiences; but, after the first interest fades, I think one feels a disappointment. We begin to question the frame of mind, the health, the normal powers of many of these persons who testify to vivid experiences with the Divine. We think that one witness speaks as if he were a fanatic; another, as if beset with a morbid imagination; another (someone suggests it) as if he had been an eater of opium. This recent evidence of which I have just spoken is clear of all this imputation: it is from a man singularly normal, practical, rational.

But even then we must seek a universal element in such an experience. We must find that sane men all down the ages have had such experiences. Now there is just one valid way to find out what Christian experience has been in its historic continuity, and that is in what we call Christian theology. St. Paul was sure that he had seen the risen, ascended Christ, and had heard His voice. His whole life is a consequence of that wonderful meeting on the Damascus road;

and nothing else can explain his phenomenal career. St. Augustine wrote: "What is this which flashes in upon me, and thrills my heart without wounding it? I tremble and I exult. I tremble, feeling that I am unlike Him; I exult, feeling that I am like Him." He has known Christ alive. Or we may think of Eckhart in the Middle Ages, the greatest of the mystics; or, toward our own time, Jeremy Taylor, who was always speaking of "the practice of the presence of God." I mention these men as types of the great procession of theologians. These were all men who felt intensely, but they were not satisfied with their individual experience, as it stood isolated in their lives. Rather they took their experience and placed it beside that of the rest of the Christian race; then bringing this experience and theirs together they ruthlessly cut off everything that was exceptional or unreal or exaggerated, and so built up what we may call a norm of Christian experience; so that if a man feels that his experience is in accordance with this norm, he may say, "I have scientific demonstration that my experience is real."

Lest one feel that this puts too much weight upon the Christian consciousness of recognised theologians, one would wisely recall the present method of the best philosophical students. Every philosopher to-day, be he pagan or Christian, does the same thing. He dare not weave out of his individual consciousness a conviction and *at once* call it truth. He takes it out into the cold light and lays it side by side with the philosophical experience of the centuries, and if he finds that, in spite of times of forgetfulness, the theory

has been coming up age after age, decade after decade, then he says, "I have in me that which is no mere theory, something which is truth — something that will not down, will not die. It is a necessary idea. It is *truth*." In the same way exactly, candid history tells us that any earnest man may *expect* to know the living, present Christ.

Now some one will surely say, "This sounds to me extravagant; I depend upon the witness to the historic Christ, but Christ has never manifested Himself to me, individually, directly, as a living Person, — so I cannot believe that anyone has really had such a sublime experience." The answer which theology gives — our Lord gave it first — is that you get only as you make your heart ready; you run to the Father and the Father is coming out to meet you, — but you must start. Luther had for years been believing in the forgiveness of sins upon the authority of the Church; but he was not finding peace in his own life. So he asked his old friend and confessor what he should do, and the advice came that he cast aside all outward forms, all intermediaries, all attempts at penance, and approach the Divine Person directly. That night Luther knelt on the flags of his cold cell and opened his heart to God alone, and that night a Divine Presence came and gave him such peace as he never had known before. And the next morning, when he heard the monks saying the Creed — the Creed which he had been repeating all his life — it seemed as if he heard for the first time, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." One may begin with the individual experience and verify it by the experience of the race; or

one may begin with the historic experience of great Christians of the past, and, after years of waiting and expecting, come at last to a similar experience face to face.

I see no escape for him who would avoid the inevitable conclusion. Christ, living, vivid, real, manifests Himself to-day to willing hearts. Men of our own generation have news to tell of His perfect character.

It remains to ask in what way such sacred information may be imparted.

In the first place, it may be given unconsciously. About ninety years ago there were born in an Oxford street, within a few weeks of each other, two children. In that same street they played together; and the childish friendship blossomed into love, and they were married. Thereupon they came to our western America; and in the hardship and joy of that new life their love daily grew deeper. In the cottage where they spent their last days the wife sat quietly as an invalid, but the husband, in spite of his more than eighty years, was strong and well. He was always standing guard over her with his love. Then he died, and she was left alone — without that love which had meant everything to her all her life. As we gathered about her, we wondered how that love of eighty years could be broken. Suddenly we saw her rise, as by a miracle, from her invalid's chair, and stand by the door watching those who were carrying out the body of her beloved. We would not have looked, but we could not help it. There were no tears on that sweet,

wrinkled face; there was loneliness; but there was also a glorious confidence written there: it told of such serene and certain knowledge that we knew instinctively that One more than man had told her that her beloved was safe; and that the love of years gone was to be her love forever and ever.

Lest it seem as if we imagined this, we wisely fall back upon an historical parallel. Saul of Tarsus was standing one day before a fanatic named Stephen, who was being stoned for his fanaticism. Saul gazed at him to see the agonised face of a dying fanatic; he saw, instead, a face as it had been the face of an angel,—no trace of pain or sorrow, only joy, because he saw through some invisible medium the face of One he loved utterly. That dying face haunted Saul of Tarsus, till at length, on the way to Damascus, Saul saw Stephen's Friend, and became, through that beginning, the greatest of Christian disciples. Stephen intended no testimony; he gave it unconsciously.

Once more, Christian experience may be transformed into valid evidence in those intimate moments when life touches life, when friend touches friend.

> "Only — but this is rare —
> When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
> When, jaded with the rush and glare
> Of the interminable hours,
> Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
> When our world-deafened ear
> Is by the tones of a lov'd voice caress'd,
> A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
> And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.

The eye sinks inward and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean we say, and what we would we know,
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

"And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth forever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, Rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then . . . he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes."[1]

That is heart speaking to heart; that is deep calling unto deep; that is friend so near to friend that they two look upon the experience which is the possession of one alone, and they take out of it what neither before had fully dared to believe. It is at such a time that a man may tell of that holy moment when he trusts that he knew the living, personal Christ, — as friend knows friend.

Once Phillips Brooks revealed in a letter what, so far as his biographer knows, is unique in his friendly intercourse — a confession of his inmost secrets. "All experience," Phillips Brooks wrote to his friend, "comes to be but more and more of pressure of Christ's life on ours. . . . I cannot tell you how personal this grows to me. He is here. He knows me and I know

[1] Matthew Arnold's "Buried Life."

Him. It is no figure of speech. It is the realest thing in the world." [1] The whole letter but enforces this conviction. "I have written fully," he says toward the end, "and will not even read over what I have written, lest I should be led to repent that I have written so much about myself. I am not in the habit of doing so. But your letter moves me, and you will understand." So far as one knows, it is, outside his sermons, Brooks's strongest testimony to his direct and vital Christian experience. Why? He wrote at a moment when he felt singularly near to his younger friend: it is all in the sentence, "*Your letter moves me, and you will understand.*"

One will now naturally ask whether this testimony must be reserved for such intimate and mystical moments. Is there no time when one may tell this experience — since it is so precious — in public? Not in the experience meeting, as it is called, — for, ordinarily, words spoken there have a professional sound and do not ring true. There is just one time, and that is when the Christian preacher goes up into his pulpit and faces the people: then he alone, of all people, may tell in public what God has done for his soul. I have already spoken of Phillips Brooks. His friends have testified that however intimate the moment he insistently avoided revealing to them, in private, his inner life *by words*. His general life, his spiritual power, convinced them that he had a peculiar sense of nearness to Christ; they wished to hear him say so. They might be sitting over the night lamp, talking of most personal matters, and the friend would

[1] Dr. Allen's "Phillips Brooks," vol. ii. p. 871.

say to himself, "In an instant, I shall see his inmost heart"; and then the door of that heart was closed, and the friend saw no more. But when this same Phillips Brooks stood in his pulpit at Trinity Church, and looked down upon the sea of faces, he told every secret he had. To be sure, the language was the conventional language of general statement; but the man who sat in the last pew, straining forward to catch every syllable, could but cry to himself, "Ah, he is telling what Christ does for humanity, but really — really he is telling what Christ is doing for Phillips Brooks." Since, by prayer, by personal effort to approach Him, any minister may come to *know* that Christ lives, it is that man's glory — glory greater than that of poet or of painter — to take that assurance, that treasure, so private and personal, and to give it to men who need it and long for it; so that they too may be convinced that there is not merely an historical Jesus of Nazareth who lived once in Palestine, but that there is a living Christ, who is the Christ of Galilee, ready and eager to meet all who will come to Him, — in Sacrament, in Service, in private prayer, in the busy street.

For our purpose now it is sufficient to remember that there is material in our own day which must be reckoned with if we wish to know the character of Christ.

CHAPTER V

The Fusion of the Material

THIS rapid survey of large subjects will give one an impression of the various lines of testimony which converge upon the Life and Character of Christ. In our day, when people are prone rather to ask hard questions than to seek their answers, it is important to notice how difficult is any escape from a definite historical conception of Christ. Our generation is also given — perhaps over much — to specialisation. To get, now and then, large views, even if many details must be passed over for the time being, is essential for a sane judgment. Difficulties with minor matters are then no longer allowed to blot out the majestic picture of Christ's Reality, Influence, and Power.

The study of Christ's Personality in this book will therefore be based upon the New Testament sources; not only because they are primitive but because they best fuse all the information we have of Christ.

From all points of view these ancient records receive confirmation: first, in themselves, as bearing internal evidence of trustworthy documents written under a high sense of responsibility for exact truth; then, by reason of their acceptance by a life-producing and

life-conserving institution, the Christian Church; and, finally, by the satisfaction which they give to those who seem to candid men to be most intimately associated with the living, present Christ. That the Gospels, — to use Coleridge's happy phrase about the Bible, — "find one" who is evidently living in Christ, is mighty testimony to the fidelity of their delineation. The academic person, keen-minded as he may be, is apt to be only partially furnished, because he lacks keen-heartedness, niceness of feeling, a sense of quick intuition. There was a subtle truth hidden in the familiar saying of one who was possibly the most profound theologian of the last century,[1] that when he visited a certain washerwoman, as she stood over her suds, her radiant, intuitive faith made him feel that his laboured intellectual methods were inferior. As Pascal finely said, "The heart has its reasons which the reason cannot know."[2] The man who dissects and deals with the particular fragment is very apt to forget the strength of the whole. The Gospels will stand on critical ground; but they stand preëminently on the ground of the frank appreciation of those who *feel* the truth.

Because a man, after daring to look all facts in the face, comes back strongly to take a conservative position, the world sometimes judges him careless of scholarship. There is a bracing air of adventure in the man who tears away old confidences and declares for a new theory. The world of scholars must contain men of many minds, each fighting for his acquisition.

[1] Frederick Dennison Maurice.

[2] *Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas.*

But the scholar, to deserve the name, must be intent first upon the exact truth. If he sees the truth to be old-fashioned, if he is forced by his judgment to be conservative, it is treason to scholarship — to say no more — if he beats about for a compromise with this or that radical view. If the radical interpretation is wrong, it is wrong. Half-way to a mistake never yet, of itself, brought a man to the truth.

Therefore, though the following pages will be built upon the Four Gospels as we know them to-day, they will be so not because of any merely outward authority, but because of the authority which all branches of thought about Christ give to them. If all that we know about Christ were to be condensed into the clearest and fairest form, what could we fix upon but the words of the Four Evangelists?

The experience of Christian institutions and of Christian individuals will now and again cast illuminating colour upon certain words and events there recorded; but the Four Gospels are the essential groundwork for any scientific attempt to know Christ as He was, is, and shall be for ever.

How sure we may be of a record of Christ is shown by the misplaced account of the woman taken in great sin, which interrupts the narrative in the eighth chapter of St. John. It does not belong to St. John's Gospel. Most ancient manuscripts omit it. Those which have it vary much from one another in the text. Once it was attached to St. Luke's Gospel. Some scholars conjecture that it was written by a Johannine scholar in the first century. But whatever theory may be invented to explain it, all scholars decide it

to be a genuine bit of Christ's biography. Of course they have certain testimony based on manuscripts and other external evidence, but the real conviction comes from the sense that the event is entirely characteristic of Christ, and further the event is told in such a direct, plain way that the record convinces the reader of its fidelity to truth. It is a fragment altogether anonymous, but it is valid, unimpeachable history.

Have we not, therefore, full right to say that we may turn with confidence to the Four Gospels for clear information about our Saviour? From them we may build up a safe description of His true character.

Part Second

THE PERSONALITY OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTORY

The Method of Description

IT may help to guard against misunderstandings, if a word is recorded here upon the general plan of this delineation of our Saviour's character. Only partially may the account follow any chronological sequence, since the manifestation or development of certain traits cannot be definitely marked in time. The aim is not to present a succession of scenes in Christ's Life, but simply to sketch His character. Sometimes scenes widely separated in time and place proclaim the same attribute of His personality. Often a word from a Parable will throw upon His attitude toward life a light which no outward act has enshrined — at least so far as His acts are recorded. The book is to be in no sense a biography.

Any use of the imagination will, it is hoped, have been carefully employed. Wherever deductions are made which are not absolutely inevitable from the historic records, the principle will be frankly set down as conjecture — albeit reverent and well-considered. To avoid timidity, on the one hand, and an unsavoury rashness, on the other, may bring us to see traits of our Lord's Life which, if not certainly proved to the

mind, may appeal to the heart, and at that high tribunal may find full ratification of their fidelity to truth. In any case irreverent glibness is far from the thought of these pages, and it is hoped that nowhere will they convey the merest suspicion of it, even to the most unsympathetic of readers.

To those who look for constant repetition of dogmatic utterances in conventional form this description of Christ's character will possibly be disappointing. Such phraseology will be lacking, not from any disrespect to the historical and ecclesiastical estimates of Christ's Personality, but merely from the necessary purpose of the book itself. Michelangelo was the more wonderful sculptor because he knew anatomy, and incorporated what he knew of it in his immortal art; but he did not carve skeletons. Anyone who, however humbly, attempts to portray life, must gladly sit at the feet of those who dissect and define; but once having learned his lesson, he will have the "skeleton" hid in his portrayal where those who know may perceive it; he will not be always vulgarly rattling it.

It may seem now and again that the character of Christ is too simply told, as if we should pause to say, — "Behold His divine nature!" I am sure that the nature of God whom He came to reveal will be more exactly manifest if we try to see Him somewhat as the people of Nazareth and Capernaum saw Him. We must try to see Him with straight and unembarrassed gaze. His divine dignity will not suffer if we see Him as He was — and is.

Meantime, that there be no waiting till the end, let

it be distinctly understood on the threshold that the Christ of these chapters is altogether human — human quite as we are human — and also, at the very same time, is divine — divine as the Father in heaven is divine. If language halts in the relation of this august mystery, there is cause neither for surprise nor for condemnation.

CHAPTER I

His Obedience

HISTORICALLY the first traits in Christ's character are the traits manifested in the incident in the Temple at Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. After the apparently unconscious days of His babyhood, the silence of thirty years is broken by this one incident alone. Brief as is its record,[1] it is the only means we have of judging exactly the character of the growing Jesus; and since "the child is father of the man," its interpretation is highly significant.

Old, dignified scholars looked, no doubt, with pleased wonder into the bright young face before them that spring morning in the Temple. Perhaps they afterward questioned with one another whether the new generation were to be of so fine a quality. And we may rightly believe that it was deeply satisfying to the Boy Jesus to explain the strivings of His soul to those who approximately understood, and then to ask these learned men of long experience certain hard questions. Such conversation, such asking and answering of questions, is always above any exchange of information. The stimulus of it lies in the consciousness of being understood and of understanding,

[1] St. Luke ii. 42–51.

— in the consciousness of a golden thread of sympathy which binds the secret aspirations of different souls together. There is no need, then, at this point, to ask whether the Incarnation implied a limited, human knowledge, or even whether at this time our Lord was fully conscious of His own personality. We need only recognise the response which the conversation in the Temple roused in both Jesus and the doctors.

Upon this scene came suddenly the beautiful Mother, — hurried, anxious because she had been so very fearful that harm had befallen her Son; relieved, overwhelmingly glad, because she had found Him safe. She could not refrain from a rebuke: "Dear Son," she cried, "why have you treated us so! We have been looking for you — and our hearts have been heavy." The answer is exceedingly simple: "Why did you look for me?" he said. "Did you not know that I had work to do — my Father's work?"

What did the mother think? There was no lack of respect in the frank reply of the Boy. Only there was a tone in it which was altogether beyond her comprehension: so she locked the words in her heart — and waited. But the divine intuition of motherhood came to her aid; and to this Son — evidently far, far beyond her in intelligence and in vision — she gave the command that He return with her and Joseph to Nazareth. And He immediately obeyed. He had tasted the joys of larger intellectual environment; He knew what it was to return to the narrow life at Nazareth. Nevertheless He obeyed the constituted authority of His life.

No scene could better sum up the obedience of

Christ's whole career. He obeyed God, and, at the same moment, evidently with no admission of contradiction, He obeyed the human governors about His path. Obedience was so far a leading mark of His nature that when the Baptist introduced Him to the world, he proclaimed Him as "the Lamb of God" [1] — a title which, among other distinctions, must denote a complete obedience. How evenly and exactly Christ held the poise of obedience to God directly, and of obedience to human instruments of the divine order, is shown by His dictum, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." [2] When He had healed the lepers, He required them to show themselves to the Priests (as the laws of health required). [3] He who worshipped the Father in secret, in spirit, and in truth, never neglected the national ordinances of public worship: on days of prayer He was at the village synagogue; on great feast-days He was in the Temple at Jerusalem. Everywhere, always, He obeyed both God and man. But the climax of His perfect obedience, after the night when He said, "Not my will, but thine, be done," [4] came in the Cross: there He obeyed God by demonstrating how deep is God's love for man — even to death; and there He obeyed man — however mistaken, prejudiced, wicked — and so submitted to the network of human laws woven together for His execution. Obedience shines through the whole character of Christ: "I do always," He said, "those things that please Him." [5]

[1] St. John i. 36. [2] St. Matt. xxii. 21. [3] St. Luke xvii. 14.
[4] St. Luke xxii. 42. [5] St. John viii. 29.

It remains only to see the special aspects of this obedience, and for this purpose the obedience of the Boy of twelve will tell a thorough story. St. Luke's brief account gives us clear intimation of the three aspects which we need to study: "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. [They understood not the saying which he spake unto them:] but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart." [1] This tells (1) of obedience *in Nazareth;* then (2) of obedience *to those who did not understand Him;* and finally (3) of obedience *to God's command for Him in the atmosphere of a blind human sympathy.*

I. *Obedience in Nazareth*

It is difficult to appreciate fully what Nazareth stands for. One remembers, of course, Nathanael's astonishment: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" [2] It was a town too mean to be called

[1] St. Luke ii. 50, 51.

[2] St. John i. 46. The exegesis which would make τὶ ἀγαθόν equivalent to ὁ Χριστός is ingenious, but is definitely rejected by the great exegetes, such as Meyer. The attempt to overturn the traditional idea of Nazareth has failed. Interesting in this connection is Professor G. A. Smith's description of the place ("Historical Geography of the Holy Land," pp. 432–5). He shows how the people and traffic which passed on the highways near by made Nazareth what we call in America a sort of "junction," — a place where, as we know to-day, only the most undesirable elements in life lodge, all the rest passing by. The wide view of the historical sites seen from "the edge of the basin," as Dr. Smith points out, is most attractive to the modern mind. But his eloquent passage, where he imagines our Lord climbing to this ridge, and living again the history of His people, is

even provincial, — the type of all that was clownish, according to the superiority of city-folk. It was a poor country town of the northern province. It is the perpetual symbol of narrowness, barrenness, crudeness.

The boy Jesus had seen the noble Temple at Jerusalem. He knew for a little what it was to be taught by recognised masters. He knew what it was to feel life throbbing about Him in its intensity. Had He been quite as other boys the whole experience would have kindled a new fire in His soul: in His sensitive nature how radiant a glow it must have created. Nevertheless, He left it all, with no word of vain regret, and went to the plainest, most circumscribed of villages, — Nazareth.

Incidentally we may glance at the compensations of life in Nazareth, especially its simplicity. When, later, our Lord brought men to His obedience, He chose simple, plain men, and He trained them in the most severely simple environment. The site of His school for them was a desert or a desolate hill-side. And when He sent them forth to teach others He bade them go with only the barest necessities. It seems a paradox that character should grow strong and rich through humble surroundings; but it is recognised as true by the best schools in England

improbable. For had Jesus been wont to review history in this way it is strange that we find no evidence of it in His parables or other discourses. It is highly probable that He climbed the hill and looked out over the country, but — if we may learn from His parables — what interested Him were the farmers sowing the seed down in the valley, or the women grinding the grain at their poor little mills in the door-yard.

and America to-day[1] — where the most fortunate boys are surrounded by a bareness which is almost grim. The dreams of a boy must be kept, and they may best be kept in simplicity. If to a boy dreaming about the stern battles of life you give every whim a satisfaction, if you surround him with softness and ease, then you are letting him bask in the courts of the sumptuous Temple at Jerusalem — you are forgetting that obedience in Nazareth is the means of developing power. Moreover, it is inspiration for the youth whose surroundings are, by poverty, necessarily meagre, and who therefore feels cramped, to remember that He who became Greatest was obedient to the humblest home.

II. *Obedience to Those who did not Understand Him*

In estimating the meaning of Christ's obedience, we are obliged to recall that a boy of twelve in Palestine was more mature than a boy of fifteen in our conditions. It marked the time when he learned a trade, was so far released from parental control that he could no longer be sold as a slave, and was treated more as a

[1] It is to be deplored that this simplicity no longer attaches to our great universities. It was characteristic of them half a century ago, as the Hon. Joseph H. Choate recently testified, in speaking of his own life at Harvard from 1848 to 1852: "I don't know how we did it, but the simplicity of our lives was, I really think, the making of us. We went to the college pump for our own water. We lived in the college commons at a dollar and seventy-five cents a week,— meat one day and pudding the next, — and flourished very bravely upon it. There was, with it all, a very serious nurture going on all the time, a wonderful discipline." (Speech at New York Harvard Club, December 7, 1905.)

man than as a child. Remembering all the circumstances, especially remembering that Christ was entering regions of living which were palpably beyond the knowledge of the authorities of the Nazareth home, we might naturally ask if this were not the time to assert His independence, and to cut Himself loose from the petty obedience in the hills of Galilee. It is a question which can easily be asked in our own day when one distinct theory of education is that "a child should choose for himself." So we are seeing parental authority reduced to a minimum and the self-made choice of children and youth pushed to a maximum. There is an insidious notion that the character, by early, unrestrained self-guidance, will be made strong. The experiment is bearing bitter fruit, and many a parent discovers too late for what his lax authority is responsible. But even here we feel that in only the very rarest instance is the child more intelligently aware of life than the parent: even remotely it is the rarest case which becomes the vaguest suggestion of the disparity between the opening life of Jesus and the confessedly narrow horizon of His mother and Joseph. Why then did He submit? Now and then people have answered that it was to give us an example. But all right and careful thought about Christ has rejected any such unreal pose on His part: He was real to the last degree. There can be but one valid reason. Obedience is so imperative a factor in life that even He could not pass from faultless Boyhood to perfect Manhood without its full allegiance. His whole Life declares that there are people to obey in this world. There are parents, teachers, employers,

governors of every sort. Each has his sphere where he rightly commands, and obedience in that sphere is essential. Blinking at it, dodging it, may be extremely clever; it is deadly poison to the character. For it is cheating character of its great tonic, strict obedience. He who came announcing a kingdom in which men must become as little children, first incorporated in His own Life the childlike trait of willing obedience to constituted authority. And no consciousness of superiority over those to whom He gave obedience, ever, so far as the records show, allowed Him to swerve from the childlike simplicity of His loyalty to authority.

III. *Obedience to God's Command for Him in the Atmosphere of a Blind Human Sympathy*

With all this obedience to human authority, the Boy Jesus, we may be sure, never lost for an instant His sense of obligation to God. If it is assumption to say this, it is assumption clearly warranted by all that we know of Him. And another safe conjecture we may venture: the mother "who kept all these sayings in her heart," gave Him all the depth of a mother's sympathy even when her understanding was baffled. He gave obedience to God as well as to her, and her love helped Him to keep that highest form of obedience to its invariably high level.

One hears of boys who, having dreamed of a life of self-sacrifice, have gone to their fathers or mothers to tell them about the chivalrous deeds which they would like to do, the unselfish hardship which they are willing to accept; and they are met with amused mockery.

There is the gay suggestion that the lad must have been reading about Bayard, or Hannington, or Damien; or must have been talking with some strenuous enthusiast. Does he not know that such lives belong to poets and missionaries and other slightly deranged people; as for him, he must be a practical man of the world — he must be comfortable and prosperous — and stop this silly dreaming. . . . Could anything be sadder? Boys now and again hear God calling them, for example, to the Christian ministry; and mothers who are timid, and fathers who are worldly, stifle the obedience. That a somewhat frivolous mother and a commercial father should not comprehend the Voice of God speaking to the tender, unspoiled heart of their son is not surprising. The atrocity of it is that they should have no awe for it, no sympathy for their boy so fortunate, so elected of God for a solemn duty. Do you ask why a life fails to be heroic in spite of marked capacity? It is because, in a large number of cases, there has been no sympathy for God-given tasks when they first wakened a response in the heart of a boy.

The tribute which the world owes to Mary, the mother of Jesus, ought to be full of sweet music. If we marvel at the eighteen years of silence in the home at Nazareth, we must also marvel that the mother's sympathy was able to comfort and inspire, where all was to her an overpowering mystery. In His active life, there was a time[1] when "His mother and His brethren" stood on the edge of the crowd, sending word to Him begging Him to come out to speak to

[1] St. Matt. xii. 46–50; St. Mark iii. 31–35; St. Luke viii. 19–21.

them. Whether they had news of the plots against Him and were frightened for His safety; whether the brethren, with lack of appreciation from a too close view, thought Him daft and had worked upon the pride of the mother, and so all were there to ask Him to "be careful of their reputation"; whether they had come to ask some question about their common household affairs — a matter of rent, a matter of purchase, a matter of domestic economy, — we cannot know. Presumably, His brothers did not at the time believe on Him, since they did not believe a little later;[1] and tradition has generally interpreted this appeal of "His mother and His brethren" as an act of meddlesome interference. In the confusion made in her own mind by the fame of Jesus, and by the probable criticism of her other sons, the mother may naturally have been dazed. Our Lord's own protest against checking His discourse in order to go to them marks His estimate of the importance of His discourse and the attention of His hearers, and does not in any way imply that His mother was unsympathetic.

However this may be in the later life, the period of preparation is marked by two distinct indications of the mother's sympathy, one at the beginning, one at the close. When He was twelve, she kept in her heart "sayings" which she could not understand; and when — the preparation over and the ministry begun — He was at a wedding where the wine had been exhausted, she told the servants, with a trust which means volumes, to do whatever He told them.[2] In

[1] St. John vii. 5.
[2] St. John ii. 5.

the light of such trust and sympathy His obedience to God had developed. That the divine obedience could keep pace with the human obedience through all the eighteen quiet years must never be forgotten; and in that memory must be included the trust of a mother who did not, so far as we may see, hold him back from the finest, the hardest, the best. Now and again the mother instinct, as she saw Him coming home from some reckless and perilous kindness, must have foreshadowed something like Calvary: but I think in those years, when she saw Him daily, she did not put out even a trembling hand to detain Him. If later, when He was out in the vicious world, unprotected, her hand was at times half raised to hold Him back, it was not because of less sympathy but only because of more yearning love.

That Jesus Christ would have been a perfect type of regal obedience under any circumstances, we who follow Him feel certain; but it is a study of intense human interest to discover in what environment that obedience grew to its complete strength.

CHAPTER II

His Self-Knowledge

THERE was an ancient heresy[1] that the divine nature was joined to the human nature of Jesus when the spirit descended upon Him, at His Baptism, and was withdrawn just before the Crucifixion. Any such limited notion of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ is impossible if one depends upon the reliable sources which we have in the New Testament and in the interpretation of the Christian Church. From the birth of Jesus He had both a human nature and a divine nature.[2] This

[1] Gnosticism, as described by Irenæus and Theodoret.

[2] One must be on one's guard always in speaking of the "two natures" of Christ. It is never right, for example, to think that Christ did certain acts as from His divine nature, and others from His human nature. Yet sometimes men seek to avoid difficulties by saying that it was Christ's humanity only which suffered, was tempted, etc. The divine nature is made to seem a sort of closed casket which He carried about with Him, and opened when it pleased Him. We must grasp at the start that He was never more human than when divine, and never more divine than when most thoroughly identified with humanity. The problem was fought out (literally) in the early church, and at the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) it was declared: "He was . . . one and the same Christ . . . acknowledged to be in two natures, *without confusion, change, division, separation;* the distinction of natures being by no means destroyed by their union;

is no less clear in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, where the Infancy is recorded, than in the Gospel of St. John, where we read,[1] "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And the Christian consciousness everywhere and always has clung persistently to the feeling of necessity in this idea that the Baby of Bethlehem, as well as the Ascended Christ, is both Son of Man and Son of God.

A very absorbing problem is, however, left to us. When, we may ask, did the Man, Christ Jesus, become aware of His real nature? Because the answer to this question throws abundant light upon His character we must grapple with it. It is a subject that must recur, but we may at least begin to investigate it here.

There has been the feeling on the part of some that it militates against the perfection of Christ's divinity if He were not from what seems unconscious babyhood fully aware of His divine as well as of His human nature. This feeling was responsible, in an

but rather the distinction of each nature being preserved and concurring in one Person and one Existence; not in somewhat that is parted or divided into two persons; but in one and the same . . ." Of course the philosophic use of words has somewhat altered, but this old symbol declares as plainly as possible that we cannot think of Christ as being sometimes divine and sometimes human; He was always both.

Cf. Westcott ("Epistle to the Hebrews," p. 66): "The two Natures were inseparably combined in the unity of His Person. In all things He acts Personally; and, as far as it is revealed to us, His greatest works during His earthly life are wrought by the help of the Father through the energy of a humanity enabled to do all things in fellowship with God (comp. John xi. 41 f.)."

[1] I. 14.

early age, for the invention of the so-called Apocryphal gospels. Here we find the little Child Jesus turning children into lower animals, making clay sparrows to fly, carrying water in his cloak, or throwing cloths into a dyer's vat and bringing them out each in the colour ordered. The miracles themselves are shockingly silly or unkind; but quite apart from this, one who knows the artless historic account of the Childhood of Jesus is disturbed by the thought that this period should have had any miracles at all. The truth of it is that such an idea sacrifices the humanity. There must be found a way by which the Christian consciousness may be assured that He who was altogether divine never for one instant ceased to be human. We are in very deep waters, but it behooves us not to sink in them. Will it not help if we remember that a characteristic of divinity is stability, changelessness; and that a characteristic of humanity is growth; and then to turn to that part of the brief record in St. Luke which says,[1] "Jesus increased in wisdom"? May we not say then with confidence that Jesus gradually became aware of His real personality; that is, among other ways of growth He had the human development of His knowledge of the unchanging divine nature which was in Him?

In a subject so difficult we must cling cautiously to our sources; and for this purpose I select (1) His visit to the Temple when He was twelve years old, (2) His Baptism, (3) His Temptation, and then, in general, (4) His Public Career. I believe that in each

[1] St. Luke ii. 52.

one of these we shall find a gradually clearer knowledge of Himself.

1. *His Visit to the Temple when He was Twelve Years Old*

Principal Fairbairn, one of the wisest of theologians, tersely says [1] that the student of Christ must call the new science of psychology to his aid.[2] Nowhere may we more wisely do this than in the study of our Lord's growth in self-knowledge. We do not need President Stanley Hall's great book [3] to assure us that the years when boyhood merges into manhood are years of beguiling visions for every open-minded youth. Then it is borne in upon a boy, in part at least, what he is. The fables of childhood fall away, and he discovers many of the laws of his natural life. There is a tenderness, an openness to fine influences, a sense of God, a will to reach up to Him, a feeling of dependence upon Him, which are unique in the course of human life. Boys, we know, sometimes try to fight off the influx of these new emotions. They are perplexed, for this great vision of their origin and their destiny, this tenderness taking hold of their sometimes rough boy-nature, seems unnatural, sentimental. When the beautiful or the lovable draws tears to their eyes, and the deep feelings surge in their hearts, they steel

[1] "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion," p. 381.

[2] *Cf.* Archbishop Temple ("Memoirs," vol. ii. p. 517): "Our theology has been cast in the scholastic mode, *i.e.*, all based on Logic. We are in need of and we are being gradually forced into a theology based on psychology."

[3] "Adolescence."

themselves and try to appear hard when their inmost lives are melting for very tenderness. It is wholly inadequate, as President Hall amply demonstrates, to look upon this upheaval as a mere physical change: it is spiritual, it goes to the depths of life. And the Christian Church knows it well, and therefore comes to the youth at this crisis with the invitation to Confirmation: a definite act may then seal these high aspirations, these deep convictions, and make them a permanent possession.

Now is it not wise to remember that in the more advanced Oriental country, the boy Jesus, upon His visit to Jerusalem, was entering upon this great period of opening visions? Had He been only like any other clean-hearted boy, and nothing else, He would have been stirred as never before by all that was religious and generous.

And beside this, there is one other fact which, though a mere possibility, must be reckoned with. May it not have been the habit of careful Jewish fathers, as it is the habit of conscientious Christian fathers to-day,[1] to take their sons into their confidence at this crisis, and to tell them in sacred, solemn words how life goes on from generation to generation, so that no sordid thought of so holy a subject may touch their minds? And if this was so, is it a rash flight of the imagination to think that this was the time when Joseph would have told his sacred Charge that he was not His father? If Joseph explained it all as far as he could on that pilgrimage to Jerusalem,

[1] See H. D. Sedgwick's "A Gap in Education" Atlantic Monthly, Jan. 1901, pp. 68 ff.

if to the Boy Jesus the words came as the verification of increasing intimations that though He was like other boys He was also different, then what a new meaning is revealed in His reply to His mother's rebuke in the Temple. Had she not wished Him to know? And now that He knew positively, would she not have Him serve His Father — stay for a little in His House — do His work?

Though such an exegesis may help to emphasise the almost certain meaning of this time for the Boy Jesus, the meaning itself is not changed by its rejection. As a human being He would necessarily have shared the awakening to consciousness of power which then comes to every normal, unspoiled life. Other boys begin to get an intimation of what they are in body, mind, and soul; may we not think that this unique Boy began to know who *He* was then, and with that amazing knowledge set His boy's face to the final purpose of His life — to work out His Father's Will? If He grew in knowledge, — and we know that He did so grow, — we find the first stage of His growth here, — so far as our records give us light.

II. *His Baptism*

Still proceeding with scrupulous care, let us examine the baptism of Christ, with the single purpose of discovering what it can tell of His self-knowledge. It will be impossible to make certain that the self-knowledge there displayed was a recent development; but it is evident in any case, I think, that the knowledge was then borne in upon Him with an intenser conviction.

We must first picture the scene. John the Baptist was surrounded by a crowd of penitent people bewailing their sins; the stern preacher was exhorting them, and doubtless their very faces told eloquently their own self-conviction of a crooked past. Jesus came among them, and going up to the Baptist asked to be baptised. Instantly John drew back: "I have need," he cried, "to be baptised of thee; and comest thou to me?" [1] The one reason John had given for baptism was sin: here was One who did not need it, for He had no sin. That our Lord had at this time reached a consciousness of His freedom from sin, is clear from His reply: "Suffer it now." I shall later return to this event to show what it tells of His identification with humanity. Just now I point out only this: under the utmost publicity Christ acknowledged that He had no consciousness of sin. It may safely be thought that as He watched the lives of His family and fellow-townspeople in Nazareth He would have marked how they all seemed to be inevitably drawn to sin, and we may wisely believe that the difference between Himself and them would gradually impress itself upon Him; but in this glare of a public act, under the Baptist's protest, it would seem likely that He was completely aware of the difference. He knew Himself to be sinless.[2]

[1] St. Matt. iii. 14. I am aware of the attempt to make this an interpolation; but see Sanday's article "Jesus Christ," in Hastings' Bible Dictionary, p. 611.

[2] From time to time the attempt is made to show that Christ was not sinless. But such attempts must always fail, because, at the very least, Christ must be included among the saints; and it is psychologically proved that saintliness is invariably sensitive to sin. Speak-

It was at this time that He was conscious of the Father's approval in a unique way, for He saw a sign and heard a Voice, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." [1] That John also saw and heard we know by his own testimony,[2] but this is not impor-

ing of some of these questioned acts of Christ, Dr. D. W. Forrest says ("The Authority of Christ," p. 20): "What alone is the final justification of such an act? It is that *such a one as He* should have performed it without subsequent regret." And again (p. 21): "Therefore, when you have one like Christ who had the highest conception of God and holy love, who gave to the idea of man's obedience and consecration its last expression, and who Himself lived in the constant sense of the Father's presence; one, moreover, who had the keenest sense of what was due to men, of the need of charity and forbearance toward the sinful; then, even if conceivably He had been swept by righteous indignation beyond what was justifiable, one thing is certain, — He would have realized the fact afterwards. In His calmer hours it would have risen up to judge and abase Him." Dr. Forrest also weighs the certainty of the *record* of such consciousness of misdoing, had there been any. "The Apostles," he says (pp. 25–27) . . . had lived in the closest intimacy with Him for many months, they had seen Him in every situation which could test His patience, temper, and unselfishness. They had more opportunities of truly knowing Him for what He was than Boswell had of knowing Johnson. . . . If Jesus had been conscious in the faintest degree of such shortcoming, that consciousness must inevitably have found expression daily in a thousand ways, not merely in direct confession, but in His attitude towards them, and in the tone of His references to the Father and His own relation to Him. The Apostles had no such recollections of Him. The claim they made for Him was the claim which, from the nature of their communion with Him, they had good reason to know He made for Himself. . . . When He chose the Twelve that 'they might be with Him,' . . . He provided for us the guarantee of His moral personality which a historical Christianity requires."

[1] St. Mark i. 11; St. Matt. iii. 17; St. Luke iii. 22.

[2] St. John i. 32.

tant for our purpose now. We need only notice that Christ was aware even more fully of His divine nature, and had, evidently as never before, the consciousness of His Father's approval. That He withdrew at once to the wilderness to be alone shows plainly, among other things, how overpowering were His emotions. Is it presumptuous to believe that He was conscious as never before who He was?

III. *The Temptation*

Now let us merely glance at the Temptation. It has very large revelations in store for us, but we may say here with safety that at this time Christ first became fully aware of His unlimited power over the laws of nature. He had been for a long time lost in the absorption of thought and devotion. He was acknowledging His divinity to Himself; and then His humanity asserted itself: He was hungry. There was nothing at hand wherewith to satisfy such hunger. He saw the round stones of the desert, so much like the Hebrew loaf. Why could He not use His divine power and turn them to bread? *He could!* We need go no farther. Certainly a large significance of these days in the desert of temptation attaches to this sudden awakening of the powers which His divine nature involved. To be, as no other, Son of God; to be sinless; to be approved by the Father; — yes, all this the records tell that He had known. And now it was sweeping over Him, — dare we not say it? — what awful power, capable of destruction or of beneficence, was locked in His life. As a lion, loosed from his cage, admitted free and unrestrained among the

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feeble animals of life, trembles with the consciousness of his might, so Christ, in the turmoil of the world at last, was aware of the inexhaustible strength at His command.

IV. *His Public Career*

After this Christ's knowledge of Himself is like a broad river, and we can no longer, except very generally, trace its growth. The interest now is centred upon the growth of His disciples' understanding of Him. We may, however, pause a moment to notice how deep and full His self-consciousness was all through His public ministry. To trace any growth in His own consciousness after the choice of His disciples is impossible because it is clear that until St. Peter's Confession He refrained as far as possible from public declarations of His character, that the disciples might discover it gradually for themselves. So words taken at random will suffice to show how entirely sure He was of Himself. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?"[1] was His challenge to the Pharisees[2]; and toward the end He said to His disciples, "The ruler of this world cometh and hath nothing in me";[3] that is, He is found sinless. But these are negative. Think of His positive declarations: "I am the light of the world";[4] "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me";[5] "I proceeded forth and came from God";[6] "Ye are from

[1] St. John viii. 46.

[2] The exegesis which would limit this challenge to patriotic loyalty, is ingenious, but finical and unreal.

[3] St. John xix. 30. [4] St. John viii. 12. [5] *Ibid.* xiv. 6.

[6] *Ibid.* viii. 42; xvi. 28.

beneath; I am from above";[1] "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me";[2] "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered";[3] "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make an abode with him";[4] "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[5]

It will be observed that these passages all emphasise our Lord's consciousness of His divine nature. It is exactly as important to quote passages which show His abiding consciousness of His human nature; and I shall do this in another connection. Meantime, in general, we may recall that our Saviour constantly referred to Himself as "the Son of Man." It will for our purpose at this time suffice if we notice that He came to a full knowledge of His united character of divine and human natures as men have always come to a knowledge of whatever is in them. That is, the eternal nature which lay hid in His life from the beginning, day by day unfolded in His growing knowledge, till at length He knew Himself completely as He was. There is still a difference between Him and other men even in this, in that whereas He came to a complete knowledge of Himself, most men, though acquiring such self-knowledge by degrees, attain in the end only a feeble insight into their real natures, and only the very greatest men appreciate even approximately the power of the humanity which God has

[1] St. John viii. 23. [2] St. Matt. x. 37.
[3] St. John xv. 6. [4] St. John xiv. 23.
[5] St. John xiv. 9.

bestowed upon them. Jesus Christ, having mounted by the human stages of self-consciousness, at last knew perfectly His whole character. Had Socrates seen Christ's day, he would have found at last One who perfectly fulfilled his chief precept, "Know thyself."

CHAPTER III

His Self-Identification with Humanity

HORACE BUSHNELL, in a book which in its day made an epoch in theological thought,[1] has a brilliant chapter under the title, "The Character of Jesus Forbids His Possible Classification with Men." This chapter must always remain one of the famous expositions of our Lord's divinity; but the heading of the chapter is untrue: Christ *must* be classed among men. He who was Son of God, also was completely Son of Man. And the inspiration of the truth is that He Himself insisted on being identified with humanity.

From this consideration I eliminate, for the present, the thought that by the Incarnation itself He was forced to be identified with humanity: I shall try to show how at three times (to speak of no more) He voluntarily identified Himself with conditions that we call peculiarly human: with sin, with sorrow, with pain.

I. *With Sin*

When the Baptist protested against baptising Christ, our Lord said, "Suffer it now: *for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*[2] Various interpretations are

[1] "Nature and the Supernatural." [2] St. Matt. iii. 15.

inevitable. A common one, which says that the act had no reality for Christ, but was merely an example, must be rejected instantly: it does violence to Christ's invariable sincerity. There is only one interpretation which can satisfy. John's baptism was distinctly for sinners; Jesus was not a sinner; yet He said that it was His duty to be baptised. What can it mean but that He, as part of humanity, felt, sinless as He was, responsible for the sin of Humanity? In other words, the sinless Man was not to be what we call an individual, sharply cut asunder from the rest of the race, rejoicing in His perfection, while all other men had blundered and failed. The most conscientious people of His day had been obedient to John's Baptism; of course they needed the confession and the cleansing. He would identify Himself with them; He, recognising Himself as inseparable from humanity, would bring His perfect Manhood to the test necessary for all others; for so, being a sharer with them of all burdens, He knew the Baptism even for Him to be necessary. It is an act typical of our Saviour's whole life. "He came unto His own":[1] He came to identify Himself completely with the humanity which He was destined to save. On the threshold of His public life He made it plain that though He individually had no mistakes to lament, He was ready to be held responsible for the mistakes of humanity. There was no way of separating His humanity from the humanity of others, any more than a drop of water in the ocean can dare call itself an individual in the myriad waters of the sea. So it became Him "to fulfil all righteousness."

[1] St. John i. 11.

This is one of the high notes in the endless song of our Redemption, and we may see, in passing, what a sublime suggestion it has for our own living. The inspiration melts into a solemn duty. As Christ sinless felt His responsibility for all the humanity of which His perfect humanity was part, so we (who perhaps think ourselves fairly good) have definite and real responsibility for the rest of the world. It is a great paradox that each man is responsible for his own soul and is, at the same time, his brother's keeper. In one sense a man is as good as he is individually; in another, and very exact, sense, he is no better than the humanity of his neighbourhood, his state, his nation. It takes rough lessons to teach us that no man lives to himself. A man commits murder or steals, and we say that this is nothing to us; but when the train of events so started comes toppling into our happiness, we discover that the crime of another is something to us after all. So when next we get down on our knees of a Sunday morning and say the General Confession, we are thinking of others as well as ourselves. We are no longer individuals; we link our lives to the people all about us, in church and out of it, and we are pleading that humanity — *our* humanity — may be rid of this abominable habit of wrong-doing with all its attendant misery and distress.

The ardent follower of Christ is prone to claim for Him divinity at the expense of humanity. If He himself was distinct in the maintenance of His divinity, He was no less distinct in insisting that He be counted as a man. We can better appreciate what this tells of His character if we remember how we, who are

only human, are content, when it is possible, to be partakers exclusively of the upper layers of humanity. If a man has money we wonder why he does not give it to make the community wiser and more comfortable. If a man or a woman is delightful to know, we wonder why this man or this woman does not come and take us for friends. If a man knows how to cure disease, we claim his skill as our property, and we say that he must come to us at noon or at midnight — whenever we need his power. This may all be granted; but if it is rational to claim for the individual the prosperity of the community, it is just as rational to claim for him its misery and sin. If he lives on its success, he must carry its failure. For the failure, as well as the success, is his. Because it belongs to humanity, he will be in-human if he is not brave enough to bear the blame for it. He who was Son of God — perfect, sinless — went down into the cleansing waters of the Jordan that He might take upon His innocent shoulders the sin of the humanity from which He did not shrink, with which He was willing to be completely identified. Is it strange that a career so begun, ended on a felon's cross?

II. *With Sorrow*

Now let us think of sorrow. Here, too, we must be sure that the sorrow which we select was by our Lord voluntarily assumed, not thrust upon Him. The distinction, if delicate, is real. There was one moment in His Life which perfectly illustrates what I mean; that was when He wept at the grave of Lazarus.[1]

[1] St. John xi. 35.

All the circumstances point to the fact that He had decided upon the ultimate outcome, and was sure of His power to accomplish it: He had told the disciples that Lazarus's sickness and death were to be the occasion of making manifest God's glory and increasing their belief.[1] While still outside Bethany He was met by the sisters, followed by their mourning friends[2]; and together they all went to the tomb. In a moment Christ was to recall Larazus to life; does it not seem that such knowledge of this immediate joy for Himself and His friends would preclude any grief on His part? But the narrative is emphatic: when He saw Mary weeping, and the friends also weeping, "He groaned[3] in the spirit," "He was troubled," "He wept."[4] Why was this grief? I shall have something to say later of His sympathy, but something deeper than sympathy was here. I shall also speak of His inevitable humanness: it might be possible to ascribe something to the physical exhaustion of the weeks and months of intense strain, and therein to find cause for nervousness; but the account is too strong to intimate mere nervousness, — He inwardly groaned, He was troubled, He wept. It is right to point out that, as psychologists tell us, intense moments of joy and pain have no time in them: one may suffer in an hour the agony of years. Christ, we might think, would, of course, know this, as His dear friends showed the horror of their suffering.

[1] St. John xi. 4, 15. [2] *Ibid.* 30, 31.

[3] The Greek implies a strong element of indignation against "the Jews," who were making a brave show of their wailing; but this was part of His sorrow, — *viz.*, that the grief of the sisters was attended by a heartless comfort.

[4] *Ibid.* 33, 35.

Certainly, He who knew the human heart as no other ever knew it, would know that; but still He had persistently kept before Himself the turning of the sorrow into joy. What then can His evident grief mean? One thing only I am sure: He was entering really, vitally, into the sorrow of humanity.

Dare we not say that those shrieks and tears of His friends were for Him, the groaning and wailing at all the open graves, from the beginning to the end of time; and the sorrow of this humanity was His. What a heavenly glimpse we get of this Man who wept with those that wept: it was no soft-hearted sympathy, no comforting demonstration, but the intensest association of ownership in the sorrow. For, at a time when He saw the immediate end of a certain sorrow, He entered into the depths of that sorrow and made it all His own.

It reminds one how one feels sometimes when a child goes by, sobbing; one knows that in a few steps the tears will be dried, and the child will be smiling as if nothing had gone amiss; but if one is honestly human, those sobs will cut sharp into the heart. What if they do last but the twinkling of an eye! They are real: they sound the profound note of the sorrow that is part of our human heritage. Jesus Christ had sorrows of His own; but He also voluntarily identified Himself with the great world-sorrow which catches at the heart-strings of all humanity.

III. *With Pain*

The keenness of physical pain has always seemed a peculiarly human mark. One detail from the Day

of the Cross will suffice to show how Jesus Christ voluntarily identified Himself with the pain of the world. It is perhaps the climax of the voluntariness of the whole Passion. Judas within and the Pharisees without, had been drawing the net of destruction close about Him; and the people's loyalty had been fading away. But there had been ample chance to withdraw from Jerusalem. His stay had been voluntary. And when the officers had come with swords and staves to take Him, He had told them plainly that even then He could call such a force that the whole world would flee before Him. He had gone to His trial voluntarily. Then through the whole of that dreadful Friday He had made all who had seen Him aware that He was the Powerful Man among all who had insulted and despised Him: His superiority had been expressed neither by defiance nor by carelessness, but by the willingness of His surrender. At last He was about to be nailed to the Cross. The Roman soldiers were affected by His presence; their hardness was softened; they offered Him "wine mingled with myrrh" — which would deaden the pain. "*But he received it not.*"[1] He would not let the pain be deadened: He would bear it all. Voluntarily, then, He accepted the physical pain of humanity.

From that moment physical pain has had a meaning. It is bound up with the life and history of humanity; The ascetic courts it; the worldling tries to ignore it. The Son of God neither courts nor ignores it, but voluntarily accepts its sharpness, when in plain, straight human fashion He finds it right across His path.

[1] St. Mark xv. 23.

Moralists are beginning to cry that the boasted anæsthetic is not an unmixed blessing, for it too readily delivers the body from pain. There is a mystery and a help in pain which the possible escape from it begins to demonstrate, so that even the unthoughtful are now fain to believe what men like Erskine [1] and Hinton [2] have long ago explained.

We must remember how the great Thomas Arnold as he lay dying, with the terrors of *Angina Pectoris* taking hold of his life, thanked God that he who had lived painlessly was suffering the intensest pain at last. That thanksgiving came not from any stoical hardness, but from the depths of Christian sensitiveness and tenderness.

Christ suffered physical pain, one must believe, of necessity, in the ordinary course of His humanity. But because once at least He refused to have the pain that came to Him in any way minimized, we know that He seized upon this means still further to identify Himself with the humanity whose very dregs of woe were altogether His.[3]

[1] "Brazen Serpent." [2] "Mystery of Pain."

[3] The possibility of Christ's identifying Himself with the limitations of human knowledge is discussed in Chapter XV.

CHAPTER IV

His Conquest of Temptation

THE author of the Epistle to the Hebrews condenses the story of Christ's contest with temptation into one glowing sentence: "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."[1] It is of first importance to believe that Christ was really tempted. A good many people feel that because He *did* not yield to temptation, He therefore *could* not yield to it. They look upon His temptations as a sort of dramatic experience to teach us how, in an outward fashion, we ought to meet our temptations; but they suppose that there was no struggle in His heart. It was, they think, a mere formality, like a wave of the hand. This rather common interpretation is a wild distortion of the plain fact. If it was not possible for Jesus to have committed sin at any moment of His career, He was not a man. Because He was a man, His sinlessness came from no safe and easy impeccability, but it came from a savage battle, involving excruciating agony.

I. *The Greatness of His Temptations*

It may be assumed, I think, that if our Lord's divine nature helped Him to conquer His temptations,

[1] Hebrews iv. 15.

the very power that lay within this divine nature intensified also the temptations themselves. Therefore the human nature of Christ had from His divine nature no more help than was needed to cancel the enormous enlargement of the possibilities of sin. So the humanity of Christ had as real a battle as the humanity of any man can have. He who was human and divine had not an easier struggle than we; it was harder, more intense.

One must speak with extreme caution, but I feel convinced that what we call lower instincts make their appeal to the saintly quite as they do to the vicious. A sterner will, occupation with higher thoughts, a series of victories rather than a series of defeats, account for the difference in result. Good, firmly formed habits may then dull the appeal; but one may suspect that to the finest as to the crudest nature the appeal does come at some time, and the struggle to overcome is no less fierce for the man who perpetually succeeds than for the man who perpetually fails; that is, at first. For it is an axiom that each succeeding victory is a little easier to win; each succeeding defeat is a little more quickly inflicted.

So when scholars find in Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness the invitation to satisfy carnal appetites, typified in the beckoning to turn stones into bread, they are doubtless justified. He who was tempted in all points like as we are must have met the whole range of appeals which come to men. The error arises from dwelling appreciably on these lower instincts, because the temptations that come only to a richly endowed character are so much more beguiling, and

so much more difficult to thwart. In passing over the more ordinary temptations that besiege our flesh, I shall not therefore be forgetting them; I shall merely allow them to be absorbed in the unique temptations which came nearest to Christ's susceptibilities. For our purpose now the Temptation in the Wilderness will give us all the needed details.

The first note struck by the Temptation is in the "if" of the first and second parts. "*If* thou art the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." [1] . . . "*If* thou art the Son of God cast thyself down." [2] This is clearly an invitation to demand of God a test. It is practically doubt of God's veracity. For expand the evil argument, and see what it becomes: "You believe that you are the Son of God: very well, — what proof have you of it? Do you think inspiring thoughts enough? If God is your Father is it not strange that He should allow you to be hungry? If God is your Father would He not save you from a law of destruction inevitable for one merely human?" The hunger for bread may have been sharp; the hunger for the outward verification of an indwelling assurance was sharper. The invitation was to doubt God's inmost revelation on the threshold of His career. As the Pharisees besought Him for a sign, so He was tempted to ask a sign of His Father. It is the temptation of doubt.

If, in an ordinary friendship — if any friendship can be called ordinary — one grows sceptical of a friend's devotion, then one knows the agony of the temptation to give the friend some test to verify to

[1] St. Matt. iv. 3. [2] *Ibid.* 6.

oneself what never ought to have been put in question. The old ballad tells a searching story when it relates how a knight declared to his beloved that his love was strong as death, and the poor girl, seeking to prove his word, threw her glove into the lion-pit and commanded him to pick it up from among the raging lions. That the lover, obeying the command, straightway ceased to love the woman who could ask such a verification of his word, is what one would expect. It is not possible to describe the full enormity of this doubt, but one readily *feels* it all. We get a more intimate application of it if we recall certain persons who say with vehemence, "If God loves me, He will spare my dear one lying at the point of death." And we can doubtless remember cases where the apparently unanswered prayer has turned the mourner into a hard, bitter unbeliever. A sign was asked, and no sign was given. So all the revelations of God's love were cast aside as rubbish.

This temptation of Christ to put God to the test must have required all His strength to meet; but an even harder temptation followed. This was the suggestion to do His work in the worldly way. The temptation to cast Himself from the Temple pinnacle, and the temptation to receive the kingdoms of the world by falling down and worshipping the devil, are so closely akin that we may think of them together. What certainly most appealed to Jesus was to bring the world to His Father's obedience. The heavenly way to obedience is by love; the worldly way is by force. We know that He chose the way of love. When He first went to Jerusalem, the shop-keeper

probably bustled by Him intent only on his petty trade, never giving Him so much as a glance of reverent respect. The pious old man on the Temple steps probably gave not even a look. Only very gradually was He to persuade men to come into His difficult and beautiful kingdom. They would be more often scandalised by His demands than drawn by His promises. It was a long, painful course that He must go. But what might have been! A great personal sensation at the start — to be dashed down the precipice and to rise from the ragged rocks far below radiantly safe — what would that not do to commend Him to the people? Who would dare to stand out against Him? And the implements and weapons of the world were right at hand. How easily He might be another Alexander, — only infinitely more successful. Was that not the real way to bring the children of men to the obedience of the Father in heaven? You do not grasp the acuteness of the temptation till you see its altruistic incentive. He was not tempted to use tools less than the best for His own sake; it was for the world's sake. These tools of the world could work quickly, — and Love always longs to work quickly for the beloved.

We know now that the slow, toilsome path, with its sorrow and desertion and seeming failure, was the perfect way to do a task of the magnitude of our Saviour's. But we know it because He has demonstrated it. It does not need much imagination to recognise that this was a temptation among the high peaks and among the clouds: few come even approximately to such heights; no one else whatever can

have the same problem. There is a glimpse of it when a father for love of his child would lead him through the shaded groves, whereas the straight and proper road for that dear child lies across the burning desert. This father may have grown to a commanding character by poverty and blows and incessant toil: he yearns to spare his son the same rough path. He would make it music and roses all the way. But he knows that his boy shall by this softness miss the strength of manhood. Yet it is hard to watch the battle — the wounds, the defeats. If the father calls a halt in his dream of luxurious generalship, if he allows his child to go the flinty road which he travelled to his strength, then that father will have conquered his temptation — in the spirit of Christ.

II. *His Temptation Continuous*

It is necessary to notice that Christ's temptation was not ended with one short victory at the opening of His public life. These temptations, and more, showed their hideous faces again and again. We may rightly believe that this temptation in the wilderness was preëminently the temptation of His life.[1] But like a general who has defeated a stubborn foe, He kept up the pursuit of this fleeing enemy to the end. There was never a reverse, but He never relaxed in His watchfulness.

A very remarkable example of a later form of the temptation came just before His Transfiguration, when Peter rebuked Him for announcing that He

[1] However the details and events may be interpreted as the record of a subjective process, the reality of it all belongs to this time.

must be rejected by the authorities and then be put to death. It was love, in one of His dearest friends, that faced Him: "Be it far from thee, Lord!" cried the affectionate, impetuous disciple; "this shall never be unto thee."[1] It was not the appeal to spare His own pain which sounded in that protest: it was the agony which His cruel death would bring to all who were dearest to Him. It was the old temptation of the wilderness in a more concrete form. The fire of His answer shows how real the temptation was to Him, for He said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."[2] He evidently summoned His whole strength to keep straight to His hard course, — harder now than ever because He was reading the sorrow of it all in the eyes and voice of one He loved.

Pass over the months, and think of the black night in Gethsemane. Whether it is possible that to such a character as our Lord's the thought of flight from Jerusalem in the earlier days of the week could have suggested itself, we need not weigh. That night in Gethsemane must have been a night of temptation as well as of agony; or, more accurately, the deepest part of the agony must have been that any temptation should appeal to Him, as He faced the consummation of His purpose. What can it mean but the temptation to escape the horror when He prayed, "Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me."[3] The only escape He sought was by His Father's permission; but the prayer implies a

[1] St. Matt. xvi. 22. [2] St. Mark viii. 33.
[3] St. Mark xiv. 36.

temptation, because He at once hurls back the thought: "Howbeit," He prayed, "not what I will, but what thou wilt."[1] In a flash, He had met the temptation: but what an agony of suspense must have come in that instant when the question was opened. When a little later the soldiers took Him, He said that He could even then bring more than twelve legions of angels to His aid[2] by a prayer to His Father. We must be extremely careful, but is it not reasonable to think that this way of deliverance had been one of His temptations that dark night? Here again you feel how immeasurably His divine nature enlarged the scope of His temptation. To have such unlimited power, and to meet villany with the poor weapons of the weakest of men!

Not even here, however, did the temptations of this tempted Man cease. On the cross, He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[3] Did the pain and the weariness for one awful moment tempt Him to doubt His Father's love? We may only ask the question; and then repeat, "He was tempted in all points like as we are." Was He hurling back the tempting voice to the very end! Does it not certainly seem so?

III. *His Risk of Yielding*

I spoke in the beginning of this chapter of the reality of Christ's temptations: there was a real risk of His falling into sin. Until we appreciate how vivid a possibility this was we fail not only to see Christ's

[1] St. Mark xiv. 36. [2] St. Matt. xxvi. 53.
[3] St. Mark xv. 34.

humanity, we fail also to see the massive heroism of His life. There is abundant evidence that He was conscious of this terrible risk, and that the tragedy of it hung always over His happiness.

We feel it first in His eagerness to get away to quiet places for prayer. Sometimes He spent the whole night in prayer. There is here surely more than the mere joy of communion with the Father. The prayers in Gethsemane demonstrate that He was wont to pray for strength. The intense longing to be away from the people and to get solitude for the hours of prayer show in earlier days the same craving evidently. And we must believe that Jesus prayed His own prayer with His disciples: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

In the High-Priestly Prayer He says, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do."[1] Does that not imply, among other things, a thanksgiving that He had been able to maintain His sinlessness against very imminent risk of failure? As a man stands among high mountains on a clear day and feels himself part of the great nature God has made, so our Lord must have felt the awe and the danger of His own majesty — our little risks of failure vanish into nothingness when we contemplate all that was at stake in the maintenance of His perfection. God gave Him a white soul, and thus far He had kept it unspotted from the world.

But, after this, another day was to pass. There was yet risk. He had heard the taunts, "Save thy-

[1] St. John xvii. 4.

self and come down from the Cross";[1] "Let Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe."[2] He had cried His despair, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[3] Was the battle still raging? We dare not say. But at the last He cried, "It is finished!"[4] From His lips we cannot believe them simply the words of a tired humanity going into peace. May we not think that the words were the last shout of the Victor. Temptations had surged about Him to the last. The powers of heaven and earth were at His command, to misuse as well as to use. In the growing weakness of the last moments the temptation *may* have come to yield even then. Then the cry! The end was near. Not one stain on the sinless soul! God's Perfect Man, through all tribulation was perfect still! "It is finished."

[1] St. Mark xv. 30. [2] *Ibid.* 32.
[3] *Ibid.* 34. [4] St. John xix. 30.

CHAPTER V

His Patience

IN the anti-slavery days there was an American reformer who, if vulgar, was forceful. He foresaw the inevitable advent of justice and right, but the slowness of their coming irritated his nervous energy. "God," he said, "is not in a hurry; but I am." As we reflect upon the history of the world, we must always be impressed by the wonderful patience of God. And as we think of men's ambitions for themselves or for others, we must decide that impatience is a trait of even the best of humanity. Therefore, when we meditate upon the Patience of Christ we catch a distinct note of His divinity.

It is easy to mark instances of Christ's Patience at every turn, but there are three examples of supreme interest: His own Preparation; His Training of the Twelve; His Waiting for the Cross.

I. *His Preparation*

It is trite to exclaim upon the thirty years of our Lord's Preparation, when the Public Life was to be, at the longest estimate, not more than three years. Eighteen of these years, at least, the records show,

were years of conscious preparation.[1] At twelve He was ready to talk with learned men about high and deep subjects. Must not His sensitive nature have felt already the hollowness of the social life about Him, the sin, the selfish exclusiveness, the awful lack of sympathy for the outcast? Must He not already have felt that men did not give His Father a real reverence, since they were so mightily concerned about bits of ceremonial, about the borders of their cloaks, about greetings in the markets; and so very careless of mercy, pity, and love? Why, at twenty, did He not come forth to denounce the hypocrite, and to proclaim His new order of love and joy? The humanity in Him must have tingled to be leading the forces of right and kindness; but He waited, waited. It is futile to ask why He waited so long. Did the responsibility of the Nazareth household devolve upon Him, and did He refuse to desert those who looked to Him for help, till He had fulfilled every obligation to them? Or, did He feel His own need of the long years of preparation? Of course, there can be no answer. Of one thing only we may be sure: His waiting proclaims His divine patience.

Now think of it. What promising life to-day could feel its unique power in early boyhood, could feel the

[1] *Cf.* Charles Moinet ("The Consciousness of Jesus," p. 22): "To look upon His first thirty years as isolated from His public ministry and as pervaded by a different purpose is a great mistake. It was a time of preparation for what followed, and stood in the closest connection with it. But for it His ministry could not have been what it was. His whole life was of one piece, inspired by one design, contemplating from the beginning what stood accomplished at the end."

thrill of public talk, could feel the throb of what we call the world, and then could withdraw to some quiet Nazareth, to receive there its dull training, and to wait? There is a lesson here which we in America need most to learn. We are anxious to be started on our careers, whether insignificant or conspicuous, as early as possible. The preparation is apt to be so viciously condensed that it can hardly be called a preparation at all. Nor does the fault lie with the youth alone. Some great educators are urging that, to accomplish anything, a man must be started in his vocation in the early twenties at latest. This may be true of business; but one is apt to forget that the early years in business are a sort of apprenticeship, a school of exact science of a high order. Most business men who seem to start in life young do not begin to form independent judgments and assume responsibilities of commerce till they have been drilled relentlessly in subordinate posts. We must beware of false estimates therefore. There is, nevertheless, the tendency in America to begin active life with insecure preparation, especially in what we call the professions, — teaching, medicine, the law, the ministry. In the fine arts, too, we are slowly learning that genius without training is tinsel; and that genius with training, after long years, is greatness.

There is one noteworthy difficulty in long preparations. Those with patience to endure them are prone never to begin the life-task. Mandell Creighton, historian and bishop, was gathering the materials for his history, and was always delaying the writing, till he was made literary executor of an extremely learned

man. Creighton went through the voluminous papers of his friend to find almost endless notes — the preparations for the truly great books this man was planning to write — but out of them all, Creighton could find material for only one short article on Wyclif. So Creighton himself, taking warning, fell to writing.[1] In such connection, a very much greater name than Creighton's thrusts itself upon the memory: Lord Acton was, at his death, the most learned man in Europe, but the books he was amply fitted to write he never dared to begin.

That Christ's long preparation melted suddenly into the most vigorous public life which the world ever can know, is high demonstration of the thoroughness of His patience.

II. *The Training of the Twelve*

All the records make it plain that from the beginning of our Lord's Ministry His chief work was the training of twelve men, whom we call Apostles. With incisive command He bade these men "follow Him." This meant more than to be His friends, more than to be advocates of His principles in their communities. They were to "be with Him,"[2] and so be taught both by listening to His systematic instruction, and by watching His deeds; most of all, they were to live in the atmosphere of His life, and so to be permeated with His continuous influence. After general instructions to crowds of people, He separated the Twelve from the crowds, and asked if they understood. By interchange of question and answer, He made

[1] Life and Letters, vol. i. p. 190. [2] St. Mark iii. 14.

clear His teaching to them.[1] For deeper moments, such as the Transfiguration, the raising of Jaïrus's daughter, and the Agony in Gethsemane, He selected the most receptive of the Twelve — Peter, James, and John. And judging from results we may believe that to "the beloved disciple" He told the deepest messages of all. But none were slighted. It was for this whole school of twelve men that He rejoiced to do the miracle in Bethany, that they might believe when their faith should be put to the test.[2] It was for them all that He especially prayed on the last night;[3] and it was they who were meant when He said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself."[4]

It is quite clear, is it not, what it meant to Him to have these men understand? They were to carry His influence into the world. He himself was to write, so far as we know, not a line. Through them, the Gospel of His Life was to be made known. If they had failed, so far as events can show, His mission to the world would have failed also. We must recognise what was at stake.

Remember all this, and then study the records which show how He taught them day by day. He did not force His claims upon them: rather He refrained from telling them who He was, that they might *feel* His divine presence by an inward conviction. Long months passed before He asked them who they thought He was;[5] and because the Transfiguration immediately followed St. Peter's confession, we know

[1] St. Matt. xiii. 34. [2] St. John xi. 15.
[3] St. John xvii. 9. [4] *Ibid.* 19.
[5] St. Mark viii. 29.

what it meant to Him to have even one of them say that he understood. Immediately after this, He began to prepare them for His death.[1] He told them again and again;[2] but of course their idea of a temporal kingdom could be replaced by the idea of the real, spiritual kingdom only by the slowest degrees. How could an ordinary man, even the greatest, have had such patience! It is impossible: even the greatest would have been frantic. Such patience is divine.

Nor can we forget the signs of density and crudeness which this little school displayed under the Divine Teacher. Peter was constantly offering suggestions,[3] or even rebuking His Master.[4] James and John, within a few days of the end, so little understood the spiritual nature of the Saviour's rule, that they asked for thrones at His side.[5] Then one betrayed Him; another denied Him; and all fled from Him in His greatest need.[6] After the denial by Peter, "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter,"[7] Because Peter did not in hard grief slay himself, but could find tears, we know that this look must have been a look of trust even then. The disciples knew not what they had learned, but Christ gave the sign that He was confident that they should know it all after His resurrection. That is patience exalted upon the throne of thrones.

If the years of His own preparation show a patience beyond what we can imagine in any youth similarly

[1] St. Mark viii. 31.
[2] St. Mark ix. 31; x. 33. St. Luke xvii. 25.
[3] St. Mark ix. 5. [4] St. Mark viii. 32, 33. [5] St. Mark x. 37.
[6] St. Mark xiv. 50. [7] St. Luke xxii. 61.

endowed, the years wherein He trained the messengers of His Life show a patience altogether beyond the bounds of human comprehension. It is necessary, perhaps, to remind oneself that this patience was not easier for Him than it would have been for us: the resources at His command made such patience harder to sustain, and therefore more marvellous.

III. *His Waiting for the Cross*

Whatever degree of foreknowledge Christ's humanity may have permitted or precluded, it is certain that very early in His ministry He looked forward to His Cross. I have already referred to the times when He warned His disciples of His bitter trial. Quite apart from any help from His divine nature, His acute human instincts must have read "the signs of the time." The political forces (represented by Herod Antipas) and the religious forces (represented by the Pharisees) were violently arrayed against Him. Beside this, He saw in the Baptist's fate a foreshadowing of His own;[1] and He more than once announced that it was the mark of a true prophet to be persecuted.[2] The eagerness of the common people to make Him a revolutionary leader, of course, with each manifestation, brought the inevitable conflict nearer. His face was very early set to go up to Jesuralem.

It was not simply death to which He looked forward. It was death surrounded by betrayal, ingratitude, shame, insult, cruelty, prolonged pain both physical and mental. We call Stevenson a hero, in spite of

[1] St. Mark ix. 12.

[2] St. Matt. v. 12; xxiii. 34, 37.

some very unpleasant traits, because he worked year after year while waiting to die; but his death was only God's gift of rest and peace, and had no shadow of shame in it. We must think of the criminal in the cell looking forward to the months of waiting before the rope is thrown about his neck: no tiniest weapon can be left with him, else in the desperation of waiting, he will kill himself. Christ, perfect as He was, died the death of a criminal, as a criminal duly convicted; and to a nature, infinitely sensitive by all its endowments, the horror of the Cross must have been more torturing than to the guiltiest felon, with all his remorse.

Yet, behold the patience of these weeks of waiting. He was constantly commanding those cured by His miracles not to tell of His power, lest the crisis be precipitated before He had finished His work. Again and again He withdrew from the crowds lest they attempt to force Him to a political leadership. He was repeatedly escaping from the authorities, so putting off the day. "My time is not yet come," He said.[1] So, day by day, He held back with a firm hand the agonising end. With calm deliberation He settled, not His own affairs, but the affairs of the world; and, when all was quite ready, He faced the shame. Then; but not one moment before. That is patience supreme.

[1] St. John vii. 6.

CHAPTER VI

His Graciousness

COURTESY is a word which has grown in meaning. There have been Chesterfields in certain ages when soft manners were divorced from any nice sense of honour. These men, it has been well said, had all the luxuries belonging to the character of gentlemen, though destitute of the necessities. To-day no sane critic would dare to identify the gentleman with the mere man of fashion. Taken all in all, the name of gentleman has come to represent the highest type of character which any age or nation can conceive. It strikes deep into the fibre of life. We can no longer contrast the gentleman and the man: unless the man is also the gentleman, his manhood is lacking in strength — it may be boisterous, stirring, successful; it is not ultimately manly, it is not really strong.

Because the word courtesy stands for nothing artificial or secondary, but is the inevitable mark of any rounded life, we must study Christ's character with reference to it. Because He grew up among people who, in ordinary circumstances, have not much opportunity to cultivate what we call manners, and because He chose for His closest friends men who evidently

were deficient in the discriminations of what we call etiquette, we sometimes are told that probably Jesus, perfect as He was, shared the social limitations of His environment. Before going into detail, it is wise to seek a general answer from the great gentleman of the New Testament — the man who wrote the exquisite letter to Philemon — St. Paul. In the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul exhorts his Roman friends to be gentlemen: "Let every one of us," he urges, "please his neighbour for his good." Then he gives a supreme reason: "For even Christ," he adds, "pleased not himself."[1] One could hardly hope to find a more concise and comprehensive definition of courtesy. Courtesy, we meditate, is pleasing others for their good — no superficial bandying of compliment — something honest, helping, unselfish. "Even Christ pleased not Himself": even Christ was not content to have merely the stern virtues, — He was gentle, He was gracious.

This testimony from St. Paul is important. For St. Paul understood the distinctions of fine manners, and at the same time was sweepingly democratic. The socialist, the man who tries to value man for his ultimate manhood, is to-day very apt to defend the crudeness of the unwashed, as if there were virtue in it. And often one meets a sentence like this: "When the king is to be rebuked you must not ask that task of the courtier prelate, but must call in some rough, rude man of the people, some man like Elijah the Tishbite, or John the Baptist, or Jesus of Nazareth."[2]

[1] Romans xv. 3.

[2] Dr. A. S. Crapsey's "Religion and Politics," p. 230.

You have but to think how Elijah or John the Baptist would have talked with Nicodemus, to understand that our Lord's speech and ways were radically different from theirs. Because Christ made judgment, mercy, and faith supreme,[1] and made all other qualities subordinate when He was building up His kingdom, He did not neglect subordinate qualities — as most reformers sprung from the people are apt to do. The radical does well to remember that courtesy is not the exclusive mark of those with advantages. Many of the most vulgar boors in history were bred in noble households and had an inheritance of gentle ancestors, besides; on the other hand, some of the most chivalrous of the world's great men have come from the roughest surroundings. Courtesy, therefore, cannot be derived from any outward conventionality. That St. Paul — with His accurate discernment — felt it to be an element in Christ's character is the best testimony that our Lord extracted from His poverty and humble home those qualities which men are prone to attach to the worldly, the fortunate, or such as live in palaces.

But we need not depend on the word of St. Paul alone, significant as that is; for the history of Christ is full of material to display His courtesy. One might speak of words and events at very great length, and always be adding new elements to demonstrate how marvellous was His gentleness. I may select only one or two scenes from His life to illustrate the substance of it.

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 23.

I. *His Willingness to See the Point of View of Others*

The first element in Christ's character which makes Him forever the perfect type of gentleman is that He was willing to look at the world from others' point of view. There are many illustrations of this[1]: one instance must suffice. One Sabbath day He had healed a man whose hand was withered.[2] The Scribes and Pharisees were standing about in angry silence, watching Him. The record then proceeds: "Jesus knew their thoughts."[3] One might say, "Why, of course — His supernatural knowledge would so inform Him, — what merit of courtesy is in that?" The exact line where Christ's human nature was allowed to be dominated by His divine is not easy to discover;[4] but, for our purpose now, it is indifferent whether we affirm or deny that to know the thoughts of these scowling enemies required any conscious effort on His part. Most often it is not difficult, so far as intelligence goes, for any average man to know what those about him are thinking: the real difficulty lies in the will. The boor does not care what his friends and neighbours think; the gentleman is accustomed to observe; he makes it his business to see. Should he say what he supposes a harmless word, and should that word hurt some one, he notes instantly the faintest of shadows crossing the face of his victim. He knows what his word has done; stops short; changes the subject; and

[1] St. Mark ii. 8; St. Luke vii. 39, 40; etc.

[2] St. Luke vi. 6–10. [3] *Ibid.* 8.

[4] This is inaccurate language, but will convey a meaning; see note, pp. 91 f.

brings quickly a smile of joy to the troubled eyes. That is not necessarily a matter for supernatural insight. It is the *willingness* to see what any ordinary mortal can see if he will.

The excuse is often made for blunderers that they are stupid. They are rarely *merely* stupid. Most stupidity is only dense self-centredness, — a snug content with one's own point of view, and a determination not to look at anything from anyone else's standpoint. Carlyle was not dull but simply a boor when he referred to the author of "The Christian Year" as "some little ape called Keble";[1] it was the will that was frail. On the other hand, when Mill lost the first volume of "The French Revolution" and came to tell Carlyle so, he sat for three hours trying to talk of other subjects. When he had gone, Carlyle said to his wife, "Well, Mill, poor fellow, is very miserable; we must try to keep from him how serious this loss is to us."[2] That was the heroic will to see Mill's misery rather than his own. That day the burly Carlyle was a gentleman.

Christ did not always give joy; His word, His act, sometimes gave pain — but He never gave pain ruthlessly. Stern duty, never carelessness, lay at the root of it. He always "knew men's thoughts."

II. *His Respect for All Men*

Further, Christ knew no such thing as classes in society. Simon Peter, the blundering fisherman, felt that our Lord was giving to him as unreservedly of His

[1] Carlyle's "Life in London," vol. ii. p. 267.

[2] "Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle," note 4.

best as He gave to the cultivated Nicodemus.[1] There was condescension as little in one case as in the other. There was the same dignity, eagerness to serve, forgetfulness of self, before one as before the other. Nothing else could explain the transformation of Simon the Rustic into St. Peter — the social equal of all the Nicodemuses who ever have lived, to say the very least. And it was all done in the space of three years. It was possible because our divine and perfect Master never patronised His disciples[2]: He treated them as friends. So there was no cringing on their part, though reverence there was in abundance. He was above all their friend, even their brother.

Nothing more sharply separates the real gentleman from his imitation than this democratic spirit. "An aristocracy," it has been admirably said, "leaves only a restricted sphere for good manners. Outside the group to which he belongs the gentleman is compelled by imperious custom to play the part of a superior being. It has always been distasteful and humiliating to him. It is only an essentially vulgar nature," concludes this critic, "that can really be pleased with the servility of others. An ideal democracy is a society in which good manners are universal. . . . It is based on the worth and dignity of the common man."[3]

The man who is entirely a gentleman is the only person with whom all classes of society can be comfortable. The present Bishop of London is a great favourite in the drawing-rooms of the West End of London. But if possible the torn and weary of the

[1] 1 Peter i. 17. [2] St. John xv. 15.
[3] Dr. S. M. Crothers's "The Gentle Reader," p. 225.

East End like him even better. One less a gentleman than he, with all the pomp which England gives to a Bishop, would unconsciously have made them feel that he was of different clay. Worse still, he himself might have felt it. By a profound sincerity, he has, in his Master's way, made them know that he is their brother. It is perhaps the highest contribution which Christianity has made to courtesy, that no courtesy can now be called genuine which has not this Christian equality within it. It is never a levelling down. The gentleman does not descend. By a gracious act of faith he assumes — daring assumption always — that all men are gentlemen, and therefore at least his equals. It makes one recall the words of Jesus: "I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."[1]

III. *His Respect for Conventionalities*

Because Christ condemned the Pharisees for their attention to minute observances,[2] people have sometimes inferred that He scorned all conventionalities, either in society or in religion. But even in this excessive devotion to detail, Jesus condemned not the scrupulous care for little things, but simply the fact that the doing of them had crowded out the doing of essentials.[3] He even warned His disciples against the bad taste of these would-be leaders of the people, — their making broad phylacteries, their enlarging the borders of their garments, their keenness for chief

[1] St. John xv. 15. [2] St. Matt. xxiii. 13 ff.
[3] St. Matt. xxiii. 23, 25.

places at a feast, and for the conspicuous seats in the synagogue, their pompous eagerness for titles in public.[1] These warnings alone show Christ to have been anything but careless of the conventionalities of life. So far from protesting against them, He even endorsed the innocent social ways of the people, evidently because they make the machinery of life move a little more smoothly and leave place for higher matters; or because, through concessions to innocent customs already established, they become the medium for the expression of unselfishness and love. Only to the self-centred, conceited man do they seem silly, or unnecessary, or a nuisance. If they are innocent and reduce the friction of life, the courteous man will conform to them and not draw people's attention to his obstinacy. So Christ taught; so, above all, He lived from day to day. So it came about that the carping critics whispered, "Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber!"[2]

One catches the note of His obedience to innocent conventionalities in all His acts. As He met the Roman centurion, as He sat at table in the house of His friend,[3] as He went up to the Temple, as He entered the village synagogue, He regarded the current manners and customs as careful people had set the standard for them. But in nothing is His submission more clearly shown than at the marriage at Cana.[4]

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 5–7. [2] St. Matt. xi. 19.

[3] St. Luke xi. 38 is not an exception, since the washing was not for cleanliness, but simply a frivolous bit of religious ceremonialism which Christ wished to discountenance. *Cf.* St. Matt. xv. 20.

[4] St. John ii. 1–11.

The wine had run short. The news came to our Lord's ear. He knew, of course, the Oriental disgrace that attaches to even seeming lack of hospitality: his host could not satisfactorily explain such short-sightedness or penurious measurement of his guests' appetite. That Christ, to relieve this embarrassment and misery, performed His first miracle, shows succinctly His estimate of social conventionalities. For His miracles were performed invariably to teach some transcendent truth or to help people in dire need; in no single case were they for personal wonder-working or for trivial ends. Who can imagine an Elijah or a John the Baptist interposing at such a moment with even the feeblest of human aid? Either would have delivered a homily on the wickedness of drinking wine, or on the futility of any social usages. Christ not only conformed, but with all His power helped to maintain the honour of His host as the habits of the day prescribed. It is part of our Saviour's humility that He conformed to the manners of His people, and so, again, proclaimed the completeness of His courtesy.

IV. *His Kindness*

Since courtesy has to do with the interior of living, and not merely with the externals, it must come sooner or later to kindness. Two scenes in Christ's life amply declare the tenderness of His courtesy.

One day the Scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a poor woman who was a notorious sinner.[1] They pushed her before them, and cried out to Him her

[1] St. John viii. 3. Though the passage does not belong to St. John's Gospel, it is certainly historic. *Vide supra*, pp. 73 f. note.

shame. They declared that Moses commanded such to be stoned, and then asked Him for His verdict. The account then proceeds: "Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.[1]" But since they continued to besiege Him with questions, He lifted up Himself, and told them that he who was without sin among them might cast the first stone. "And again," says the record, "He stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground."[2] This writing on the ground has always perplexed commentators; but the simplest explanation is best. What could it have meant but that He in His infinite kindness wished to draw from that frail and sinful woman the cruel staring of her accusers, most of all to avoid adding Himself to her awful shame by studying her guilty eyes? How useless it is to speculate what He wrote. It may have been anything or only meaningless lines; but in any case the woman was having a respite. The eyes that had burned the red shame on her cheeks were turned to His letters in the sand. How delicate, how merciful, how masterful was that divine kindness.

Then one must also remember that other day when a woman in her gratitude broke a box of ointment and poured it over His head.[3] It was exceedingly costly: it told how lavishly grateful she was for all that He had done for her. The Twelve, sitting apart, whispered together indignantly over the waste: it ought to have been sold, and the money given to the poor, — one of them said it quite aloud. Think of the loyal woman's confusion. Had she done wrong? Had she been wasteful? Then Jesus interposed with His kind-

[1] St. John viii. 6. [2] St. John viii. 8. [3] St. Mark xiv. 3.

ness. He explained how inexpressibly grateful the offering was to Him: His suffering and death were only a few days off, and He needed comfort, sympathy, just as poor hungry people needed bread. The poor should be remembered; and He was very grateful that among the poor He had not been forgotten. She had given Him the help, the sympathy that He needed to face His last hard week: He, and His friends for all time, would never cease to thank her. How the trembling, frightened woman must have exulted in that appreciation. It was the essence of perfect kindness; for with all its comfort to the generous woman, it did not unduly embarrass the thrifty, awkward, well-meaning disciples.

We shudder to think how many clumsy clergymen in such a case would have read the generous woman a long sermon on the use of money, on the dangers of waste, — all parcelled out into divisions and subdivisions. The woman would have been horribly confused and humiliated. Her true purpose would have been totally misinterpreted. And the conscientious purveyor of sacred truths would be congratulating himself how brave he had been to speak out. Plainly, he would have been selfishly unkind, and nothing else; insisting on such blind self-complacency as to ignore the truth concealed in a generous act.

For kindness is not lying, as some people seem to think it. It is truth all fused with love.[1] Love

[1] *Cf.* "The Creed of Christ" (anonymous, 1905), pp. 204 f.: "The ἐπιείκεια, or 'sweet reasonableness' of Christ, to which one of the most gifted of modern critics has called our attention, pervaded all the strata of His being, and is in a sense the secret of his many-sided-

catches up the deed and understands its true meaning, — so kind words are the result. Unkindness is prejudice fused with selfishness. Selfishness examines the deed, understands not a thread of it, and blurts out its ignorant rebuke. Our Lord was chary with rebukes; true, He lashed the Scribes and Pharisees, but only when every kindness had been exhausted. His rebukes were for stubborn opposition only. For all weakness, for mistakes, for ill-judged words and deeds, for all intended goodness however feeble, — for all these He had only kindness, ranging all the way from forgiveness to the most gracious appreciation.

The courtesy of Christ made Him willing to look at the world as others saw it, to blot artificial class distinctions from His mind, to observe ordinary conventionalities of civilisation, and it made Him unspeakably kind. To the chance passer-by the outward symbol of a character all ablaze with a consuming love was the graciousness of Christ.

ness, for it enabled each of the noble qualities of His nature to reach its maximum of development without interfering with the development of any of the others, — each in turn being so gracious (one might almost say) that, however vigorous might be its own growth, it could not allow itself to overshadow its neighbors or otherwise aggrandize itself at their expense. It is owing to the all-pervading presence of this subtle virtue that in Christ, alone among men, we have faith without dogmatism, enthusiasm without fanaticism, strength without violence, idealism without visionariness, naturalness without materialism, freedom without license, self-sacrifice without asceticism, purity without austerity, saintliness without morbidity, a light which was too strong to dazzle, a fire which was too intense to flame. The inward harmony of his nature was, in fine, perfect." ("The most gifted of modern critics" is, of course, Matthew Arnold; see "Literature and Dogma," p. 139.)

CHAPTER VII

His Gladness

A GOOD many years ago it was common for severe persons to point out that Christ never smiled, never laughed. There is record, the argument ran, that He wept, but there is no record of any mirth. Further, it was said, there is no trace of humour in any of His recorded words: they are all equally solemn, almost to tears. Therefore Christ — was the conclusion — never made merry and was glad.

It is significant that Christ's perpetual solemnity is no longer emphasised. There is a feeling that such emphasis has given people wrong ideas of Christ. It has given them the impression that He who was divine was not quite human; was unnatural; and so not only dropped from His own Life what seems an innocent and essential part of living, but also disapproved it in others. Thus the natural gaiety and joy of life came at one time to be classed almost among the sins. Many a man has looked up to the austere Master, and by these descriptions has found Him so far removed from human sympathy that until some hard sorrow smote him he dared not seek the friendship of Jesus. Seventy-five years ago a radical theologian [1] ventured

[1] W. E. Channing, Works, p. 577.

the assertion that "religion is not at variance with occasional mirth"; the very guardedness of the words shows how unusual they must then have sounded. To-day, I fancy, people think of Christ's ordinary mood as not solemn, but optimistic, serene, self-possessed.[1] There is a distinct feeling that the thought of His invariable sadness has done harm, and so has misrepresented His real character. Has not the time come to ask boldly whether among the traits of His perfection we must not include something more than even optimism, serenity, self-possession: may He not have been light-hearted?

This leads us at once to inquire why it is that the writers of the Gospels should have omitted mention of such light-heartedness if it really existed in our Lord's nature. Two possible reasons suggest themselves immediately. First, it must be remembered that those who wrote the accounts of Christ's life had to choose from a great store of facts and words. Writ-

[1] This trait in Christ's character is receiving increasing emphasis in our day. Perhaps it is one of the contributions which the present age is making towards understanding Him. *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Wernle's "Beginnings of Christianity" (tr. Bienemann), vol. i. pp. 104–5: "The next characteristic of the piety of Jesus is a combination of opposites which is quite peculiar to it — the union of the blithesomeness and innocence of childhood with the courage and the serious earnestness of manhood. . . . It is probably impossible for any one to form a conception of the childlike gladness of Jesus. His life was passed in sunshine and in joy, in childlike trust toward God, in glad exultation over Nature and good men. . . . All moody and self-tormenting thoughts, all carking cares, everything done under compulsion, all unnatural excitation of one's feelings, is entirely alien to Him. He possessed the full freedom and freshness of an entirely unspoilt and simple and great soul that rested in God's love."

ten as these books certainly were by the inspiration of the Spirit, they were nevertheless written by simple-hearted men, who exercised, of necessity, the choice of what should be said, what omitted. Then, in the second place, it would be reasonable for them to omit all mention of those more intimate and careless moments when Jesus sat among His friends, and putting aside, for the time, His greatest work, entered into their simple joys. It is natural that they should omit such accounts for lack of space or time to tell them. It is natural that they should omit them, also, because these writers were of that simplest class of men who ordinarily cannot see as much of greatness or divinity in what is merry and glad as in what is gloomy or sorrowful. One suspects that they might have feared that it would be misunderstood if they told of the sympathy with which the Saviour, in His divine love, entered into their trivial joys. At any rate, the same class of people to-day, in telling of one whom they revere, are wont to pass over such mention as unimportant when compared with the serious achievements of life. So perhaps they are, but they are not denied because unrecorded. The candid scholar would expect no record of the gladness of Christ from the plain and serious writers of the Four Gospels.

Another objection that must be met is the impression that there is no trace of humour in Christ's recorded words. This, however, is an assumption far from proved. Nothing changes so radically, from generation to generation, as the point of view in human beings from which this or that aspect of life seems humorous. As we turn the leaves of some

light-hearted writer who among Greeks or Romans centuries ago attempted to cheer his fellows with pleasant mirth, we find little or nothing wherewith to make merry. It all sounds commonplace or serious; yet we may have ample evidence that the words excited the eager merriment of the people for whom they were written. There are even humorous words and phrases in the century just past that have lost their pristine joy, and have passed into the solemn vocabulary of every-day living. There are not many people to whom the ordinary page of Charles Lamb appeals as it appealed to people of Lamb's day. Remembering all these things, it is not strange that if there were humour lurking in the recorded words of Christ, we, after nearly nineteen hundred years, should not be able to discover it. It would not be surprising if for the people who heard the words there were infinite humour here and there in those solemn and scathing invectives against the Pharisees.[1] It is, one suspects, because the solemnity, humour, and pathos are so richly mingled in this Philippic, that one always reads it with such keen valuation. Must the people not have laughed outright as they heard of the fussy people who cautiously strain out gnats — and then serenely swallow camels?[2] There is the same possible suggestion in such broad contrasts as that about the camel which can go through the tiny eye of a needle[3] as easily as a rich man can enter the kingdom of heaven.[4] It was no less solemn because tinged with

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. [2] *Ibid.* 24.

[3] The best exegesis seems to make this a literal needle and not the famous "little gate." [4] St. Mark x. 25.

that delicate touch which we call humour. The pompous Pharisee going up to the Temple to thank God that he was so unlike other men [1] probably caused a smile to light up the faces of those who first heard the parable. So we may dare to believe from an investigation of Christ's words that there were many times when He was merry and glad in the same simple way in which His followers to-day believe that they have a religious right to express the same gladness.

But should all this fail to convince one of the possibility, let the greatest of the parables be recalled, — the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The Elder Son there remonstrates with the father for ordering a feast because his poor renegade brother has returned. Now recall the father's reply: "It was meet," he said, "that we should make merry and be glad." [2] By no possible interpretation can this father be anyone else than our Father in heaven — He whose character Jesus came to declare by His own Life. The Master who said that of the father of the Prodigal Son had surely a place for light-heartedness in His own perfection, — all the elder brothers of theology to the contrary notwithstanding. So far as the New Testament can show, it does seem as if we should have to admit that our Lord was not one whit more the Man of Sorrows than He was the Man of Infinite Natural Joy.

Now that our records, to say the least, allow us to put the question, we may ask what valid reasons there are for believing in the gladness of Christ.

[1] St. Luke xviii. 9–14. [2] St. Luke xv. 32.

I. *The Demand of Christ's Humanity*

The first reason lies in the demand of our Lord's humanity. We are obliged constantly to remind ourselves that He who was divine was absolutely human. He was not only a man, but a great man; and however else He must be classed, He must be classed among great men. As we gaze up and down the lists of great men through the ages, we find certain common characteristics in the greatest of them, by which we say that such and such traits belong to a great man. As we study these traits which thus seem to belong to the life of great men, we feel that they must have had some place in the life of *the* Great Man of all time. For He gathered up the richest parts of all human living, and put the stamp of His perfection upon them: He gathered up the greatnesses of humanity and offered them to God. Remembering this, and casting one's thought over the lives of great men, and recalling such diverse characters as Socrates and Luther and Lincoln — men living under different conditions and in widely separated ages, but all confessedly great — we at once feel the power which light-heartedness plays in the most profound, the most serious, the greatest living. Let it be only a suggestion that the Greatest Man must have had such gifts of light-heartedness as the great men of the ages have had, what possibilities are at once imagined for the Saviour's seasons of being glad in the human way of making merry. We think at once of the brief account of His going with His mother and His friends to the marriage at Cana; we think of those peaceful, intimate

days at Bethany with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. We ask whether these were not seasons when the overwhelming cares of His mission to the world were, in their more solemn aspect, laid aside, that He might be light-hearted with the nature and the humanity which He loved and with which He sympathised completely.

Nor may we forget that light-heartedness in great men has made possible for them a greater degree of seriousness, because it has made them normal, and, in the finest sense, human. There are two classes of people who are wholly unfitted for the serious business of life. The first class is never able to rise above its trifling; it turns the whole world into one vast jest, and refuses to do or say or think anything that can receive any valuable interpretation. We all know what stumbling-blocks such persons are in the path of any worthy endeavour. The second class of people unfitted for serious living are those who are perpetually solemn, who are as gloomy and perplexed when they have lost a button as when they learn that a dear friend has been proved a thief. They refuse to recognise that some inconveniences in life are so petty that they had best be met with a smile, and then forgotten; so that when the real sorrows come they may loom up in their just proportions and be met with the bravery which they require. The man who looks out upon all the varied experiences of life with the same invariable seriousness is abnormal. He cannot recognise the due proportion of things; he does not know life; he is useless either for an emergency or for steady effort. To be greatly serious, human

experience teaches us, a man must know how to be light-hearted. We may well doubt whether the constantly serious Savonarola could have endured the almost crushing opposition of wordly and papal power, the isolation of the Wartburg, and the fierce trial at Worms, had he been called upon to do the work of Luther. The man who could face, seemingly alone, both empire and church, and say, "So help me God, — I can do nothing else," had steadied his nerves, in days or hours not long before, by being, like a trusting child, light-hearted. So, too, we may wonder who but Abraham Lincoln with his divine gift of light-heartedness could have faced the fiery responsibility that cast itself upon the president in the darkest days of our national history. The man who could write the Second Inaugural Address, who could feel as his own the sorrow of a nation, was also the man who could be merry as only great men know how to be merry. So, we reflect, he won the power to accept from God the freshness and the courage to meet the awful responsibilities that confronted him.

Now must not He who performed the great task of the world have deigned to receive from His humanity any help it had to give? In the week of His Passion it could have been no accident, no mere convenience, that led Him out of the city each night and brought Him to the home at Bethany. As He received at the door the smile of greeting He must have eased His heart of its intolerable burden of suspense. We cannot think of His being boisterous at any time, because of the poise of His qualities; but we may think of Him, even then, as becoming light-hearted

— somewhat as He had been as a boy years before in the simple home at Nazareth. It is altogether legitimate to believe that these hours, or even moments, of gladness at Bethany fortified His strength to meet the storm in Jerusalem at the last.

II. *The Demand for Christ to Consecrate All Human Qualities to God*

Since Jesus Christ has through the medium of a human body lived a perfect life, it has been impossible for any rational man to call the body evil. Yet the tendency to dualism seems ineradicable. From the beginning till now men have arisen to separate some necessary and natural human traits from any divinely implanted instinct, and have denied any possible way of serving God by their exercise. One of these traits is gladness, light-heartedness. But if we give gladness its true place in life, it then becomes part of religion. Such an attitude consecrates our joy to God. We are His, not only when we are solemn, but also when we are merry. Is it not natural to think that Christ who brought humanity into the heart of God led the way in this consecration of the lighter moods of mankind?

Because most of us are fortunate enough to have a Puritan strain in our inheritance, we are also unfortunate enough to inherit a dread of allowing light-heartedness a place in religion. A distinguished religious leader decided not to say Grace at his table because just before and just after Grace the members of the family were laughing and talking of all the trivial commonplaces of existence. He therefore felt

it a sort of sacrilege to select such a moment to thank God for His goodness. The heresy of the dualism here is evident: it is to declare that the common joys do not belong to God. What if there be laughter before the serious moment of remembrance, and laughter afterward, is it not reasonable to believe that this upward glance of the soul is as acceptable to God as is the smile of the child when, in his absorbing play, he suddenly glances up to his mother whom he loves, and, smiling for one instant into her eyes, declares thereby the depth of his love? Surely God is not dragged down in our hearts' devotion; rather, by this act, the trivial joys of life are exalted to a plane where they also can be offered to God.

There is an instinct, growing more insistent, that we recognise Christ as the Man of Light-heartedness as well as the Man of Sorrow, because, in His perfection, He must have given all life, whether in shadow or in sunshine, to His Father.

III. *The Demand of Christ's Human Sympathy*

It is necessary to remember that Christ entered into the lives about Him with a sympathy which radiated in every direction. Because men crave sympathy most in hard sorrow, the records dwell on the sympathy of Christ given to pain, grief, and honest penitence. Psychology is teaching us to observe that there are two chief avenues to the appreciation and understanding of the human heart: one is through the great sorrows, the other is through the smaller joys. Therefore it is that he who is light-hearted has admission to many a life whose secrets are barred to all

others. The cold dignity which by its presence chills the laughter of companions — as the freezing north wind puts to silence the gaiety of the mountain brook — keeps the man who possesses it from entering some of the deepest parts of humanity. Sympathy for light-heartedness — rejoicing with those who rejoice — causes all life that is natural and wholesome to open many a beautiful secret. We cannot imagine that the innocent laughter of children or of men ceased as our Master crossed the threshold. His sympathy was complete. Probably everyone has known the unnaturally solemn person, who, when youthful members of a household begin their mirth, withdraws to a dark corner, from which, after a bit of innocent laughter, there comes now and again a melancholy sigh. Each sigh makes the sunshine for the glad ones a little dull; and the links of sympathy which have bound them together appreciably loosen their hold. There is the consciousness that there is someone under that roof who does not quite sympathise with the whole goodness of humanity. Such reflections convince the follower of Christ that a Master who did all right acts to identify Himself with humanity, not only wept at the tomb of Lazarus, but certainly at the table of that Bethany home, when all was serene and glad, returned each eager smile, and responded instantly to each musical note of a blithesome humanity.

One of the most devout men America has produced,[1] whose experience was constantly deepening through fourscore and ten years, and whose communion with God seemed to his friends singularly close and real,

[1] The late Thomas M. Clark, Bishop of Rhode Island.

dropped the remark one day that he thought men would be surprised, on coming at last into the more conscious presence of God in another world, to discover that their Almighty Father is genial. Dare we not believe that the trait of light-heartedness, which a Christian consciousness is more and more finding in Jesus, is not more a trait of His humanity than of His divinity? [1]

[1] *Cf.* W. Bousset's "Jesus" (tr. Janet P. Trevelyan) pp. 27 ff.: "Even when we compare Jesus with the prophets of the Old Testament, the same difference becomes apparent. . . . Where among those dark, tremendous personages do we find features so sunny, or so purely human, as with Jesus? Where do we read of a prophet who called the children to him in the street and fondled them? Jesus' heart warmed to the children, to the sunshine in their eyes and the magic of the spring in their hearts, no less than to the birds of the air and the flowers of the field; He loved to go down into the quiet and happiness of the people's homes; He would let Martha go busily about her household work while Mary sat listening at His feet, and He rejoiced with the joyous at weddings and festivals. . . . Hence the charm of infinite wealth and infinite many-sidedness encircles Him. . . . Yet we must not forget that both sides of the character of Jesus were fused in one. However ordinary the circumstances, Jesus Himself never is ordinary. Like the sun, which sheds its gentle warmth upon the earth, and yet remains the sun, clothed in unique beauty, overwhelming force, and raging heat, the least part of which would suffice to consume the life it created, so does Jesus appear among His surroundings."

CHAPTER VIII

His Forgiveness

FORGIVENESS has often been called "Christ's most striking innovation in morality." He found the world saying relentlessly, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Jew, Greek, and Roman, alike, cherished what was called righteous resentment, and awaited opportunity for revenge. Even the amiable Cicero so gloated over the death of an enemy[1] that he dated a letter "the 560th day after the battle" in which this enemy was killed. The pagan boast was that one had done one's friends as much good as one had harmed one's enemies. It was the badge of a manly character. This ideal, in spite of such lapses as duelling, has been completely overturned by the Christian law of forgiveness. He is said to show signs of being a Christian who, in difficult circumstances, freely forgives an offender.

What Christ taught about forgiveness would seem exaggerated if we did not have in His own acts the vivid illustration of His precepts.

To St. Peter's question, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" He replied, "I say not unto thee, until seven times:

[1] Clodias, killed in the battle of Bovillæ.

but, until seventy times seven."[1] That means unlimited forgiveness. In the Sermon on the Mount He gave details: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."[2] Earnest men, feeling the transcendent difficulties of forgiving certain injuries, have tried to find here Oriental hyperbole; but however a comparison of passages may aid them, they are met at last with the insuperable obstacle, — the Lord Himself forgave in just this sweeping way.

It is to the acts of Christ, therefore, rather than to His precepts, that we must turn. Thus we shall best see what forgiveness contributed to His character. Some of these acts of forgiveness are largely personal, touching sins affecting almost exclusively the individual, Christ Jesus. Others are toward sins against the world, against God, so that His forgiveness of these sins implies an authority more than human. It is impossible to say that one set of forgivenesses is human, the other set divine; for both alike declare the perfection of His humanity and the tender mercy of God.

I. *His Forgiveness of Personal Injury*

Personal injuries are inflicted by three classes of people, — by friends, by careless bystanders, and by deliberate enemies. The records contain striking instances of our Lord's forgiving all such offenders.

1. The friends of Christ were preëminently the Twelve. His gentle forgiveness of all their jarring

[1] St. Matt. xviii. 21, 22. [2] St. Matt. v. 44, 45.

words, when one remembers the sensitiveness of Christ, is noteworthy. It is hard, because of the natural indignation of the Evangelists (which to a degree colours their narrative), to discover exactly Christ's attitude to Judas: but the exceedingly forbearing answer [1] when Judas suggested that Mary's ointment should have been sold for the poor, indicates the affectionate consideration which He had for the traitor even then — when the betrayal was very near. To any other the vulgarity of James and John, asking for thrones in His kingdom, would have been nervously irritating.[2] He did not rebuke them; but explained carefully why He could not so reward their love. At an earlier time, when all the disciples had been talking among themselves who should be greatest, He had merely taken a child, and had given him as a type of true greatness.[3] And how, with no least trace of bitterness, His heart yearned toward them all is shown by His great prayer uttered just as they were going forth to betray, to deny, to desert Him, and, like cowards, to leave Him alone.[4]

The most conspicuous example of Christ's forgiveness of a friend is His treatment of Simon Peter. Peter's crudities [5] were evidently blotted out by His intense loyalty to his Lord. But to have a friend so profuse in his protests of loyalty — he had said that he was willing to die with Him — and then to have that friend not only desert, but grossly deny all friendship, — that is straining forgiveness to its limit.

[1] St. John xii. 7 and 8.
[2] St. Mark x. 37.
[3] St. Mark ix. 34.
[4] St. John xvii.
[5] St. Mark viii. 31; ix. 5; etc.

Jesus was alone, insulted, despised; Peter loved Him still, — why then did he not stand by Him in His greatest need? Had he any special loyalty to the High Priest? Was he too proud to associate with the poor Galilean? Had Jesus slighted him? Not one of these reasons appealed to him. Peter's love was absorbed by fear of his own petty safety: he might be involved in the same condemnation. To know that a dear friend had denied ever knowing Him — and then to forgive instantly — that was the meaning of Christ's turning and looking upon Peter[1]: that simple motion told Peter that even a sin so great as his was not treasured up against him. The proof for this lies not only in Peter's tears, but also in the meeting one morning by the lake after the Resurrection.[2] There the Saviour called three times upon St. Peter to tell Him that he loved Him. At the last, the account reads, "Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto Him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."[3] Christ *did* know that Peter loved Him through all inconsistencies and denials. The insult, the treachery, the disloyalty were as a flash; the love was eternal. For that love's sake Christ forgave Peter all.

It is important to see that Christ's forgiveness in this respect is purely rational. To forgive the injury

[1] St. Luke xxii. 61.

[2] St. John xxi. For assurance that this chapter is St. John's, see Lightfoot's "Biblical Essays," pp. 194 ff.; and for recent confirmation of it, Dr. Sanday's "Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," p. 63, pp. 81 f.

[3] St. John xxi. 17.

of a friend seems like yielding honour to indolence or callous good nature. Most men like to display what they call dignity, reserve, self-respect: this is the secret which made the gentleman of one hundred years ago feel that he must fight a duel with a dear friend who had insulted him. The only rational way to meet the injuries of a friend is to account all he does in the light of his love. It is at any rate the Christian way to meet such injuries; and that means quick forgiveness.

2. There was a second class of people who, in Christ's career, needed forgiveness. They were neither friends nor enemies, they were curious about Him when He was near, but quickly forgot Him, — they were simply the people who chanced to be standing by as He went on His way through life. These people sent out against His peace many irritations, which were almost anonymous. It was the offence of the crowds.

People came running about Christ; they gasped their vulgar wonderment; and then ran down the street to gossip about Him, to misinterpret Him, and then to forget Him. When the vigorous hostile leaders gave out their plots, these indifferent souls threw in the weight of whatever influence they had, not because they were His enemies, but because they wished to be on the side of the authorities. They helped to bring Jesus to His death, but they were only as bits of paper in the wind, blown hither and yon by every gust. They were the same people who, with crazed enthusiasm, would, a little before, have made Him king. They were in danger of bringing on the crisis before our Lord had completed His mission. What

was His attitude toward this offensive mob? Is it not all summed up by His lament over the city, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"[1] There was neither grudge nor prejudice. He scarcely so much as forgave, because the tone is one of infinite pity, rather than forgiveness; He walked always so far above them that their offences gave no personal sting.

Besides this general attitude of the crowds we may note two specific insults from this class. A Pharisee named Simon had invited Christ to dine with him.[2] The motive for the invitation is not recorded, but the context implies that Simon was merely anxious to see the famous Rabbi. Clearly he did not treat our Saviour as a friend, or even as an honoured guest; for he offered Christ none of the usual civilities incumbent upon a courteous host. Most men would have counted the omission a towering insult: for it indicated that the guest was there only to be stared at and investigated. It was not hostility, but indifference. When the penitent woman came in and anointed His feet with ointment, tears, and kisses, Simon was clearly shocked. Our Lord saw this, and with a gentleness that still clings to the words, contrasted the kindness of the woman with Simon's neglect. There

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 37: "Jerusalem," here, must be interpreted as the victim of the "Scribes and Pharisees," not the Scribes and Pharisees themselves.

[2] St. Luke vii. 36, 40.

is ample evidence that Christ felt the neglect, but there is not the tiniest trace of resentment. Simon was to Him one of the indifferent bystanders who did not comprehend; and Christ forgave him.

One other specific case will be enough. It is the most gracious of all, because at the time Christ's own troubles were so thick about Him. Among the mob which came to arrest Him at Gethsemane was Malchus, a servant of the High Priest. He was there evidently not so much from choice as from the command of his master. He was one "of the crowd." The impetuous Peter drew his sword and cut off one of this man's ears. Instantly Christ turned, and, by a touch, healed the wound.[1] To call in His supernatural power at such a time for a poor bystander shows the fulness of His forgiveness for the whole class of which Malchus was a type.

Here again we may see the element of rationality in Christ's forgiveness. The insults were so nearly anonymous that His natural dignity could not pay the least heed to the offender. How difficult such forgiveness is, however, we all know, for we have all experienced the sting and hurt of such careless and stupid injuries, coming upon us from the bystander and the stranger. Unknown as the man may be, ignorant as he may be of what he has done, we single him out for burning thought. When Christ forgave such people, it was, we may be sure, a test of His perfection.

3. Christ said to His disciples, "Forgive your enemies." It must have sounded unintelligible, impos-

[1] St. Luke xxii. 51.

sible. An enemy is often a man who would push you into hell itself with less compunction than he would kill a fly. How can one be expected to forgive an offender so venomous as that? The only answer is that Christ did it.

After Jesus of Nazareth had become famous He returned to the home of His boyhood. On the Sabbath His old companions and neighbours gathered in the synagogue to hear Him. They were vexed, indignant, "filled with wrath."[1] Naturally His fame, His power, mocked their provincial obscurity. But to have a person so familiar to their knowledge say such high words as Jesus said in the synagogue that day was beyond endurance. They tried to kill Him: they were plainly His avowed enemies. Notwithstanding, after an interval, He went again to Nazareth,[2] and again spoke in the synagogue. Certainly the narrative shows that He yearned to do some great kindness for those who, in His own town, persisted in being His foes. At last He gave up the attempt. "He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them."[3] That He "marvelled"[4] at their stubbornness demonstrates how thoroughly He erased from His mind their former hostility. He forgave His enemies in Nazareth.

Then there were the bigoted middle-class Pharisees and the disdainful officialdom, represented by the Sadducees. The Pharisees began the attack: they

[1] St. Luke iv. 28.
[2] St. Matt. xiii. 54–58; St. Mark vi. 1–6a.
[3] St. Mark vi. 5. [4] *Ibid.* 6.

were meanly trying to catch and trip Him in His talk, because they believed Him a heretic bent on the destruction of their religious customs. The Sadducees had political fears, because the populace was in danger of making Him the centre of an insurrection. So "politics and religion" — the two bitterest persecutors in the world — were rampantly and wantonly attacking His safety. He saw it all very early, but note how fully, how kindly, He answered their questions. The invectives, for the most part, were held back till the very last day of His public ministry.[1] At every turn He pleaded, taught, tried to persuade. This was the continuous act of patient forgiveness covering the months of His ministry.

At the trial at the end, even the Roman Pilate, used to stoicism, was amazed by the calmness of Christ.[2] This calmness, to amaze a Roman, had in it that element of forgiveness which creates a serenity altogether different from the hard indifference of the best philosophers. Then came the end. Our Lord was on His cross. The pain was real pain. His friends and His mother were overcome with grief. For His own pain and for the sorrows of His dearest ones, His enemies were responsible. Did He speak of these enemies then? Yes. Did He say that He would forgive all others, but not them? Did He say that *He* would forgive them, though His Father would not? Did He say that because He was Son of God He would be utterly generous, and so forgive them? We know that His spirit climbed above all these stages. He did not so much as stop to say that He forgave them,

[1] Tuesday: St. Matt. xxiii. [2] St. Mark xv. 4, 5.

He — the man Jesus, feeling as a poor mortal the agony of death — He cried out in prayer to the Father in heaven, — "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." [1]

That prayer shows the climax of Christ's forgiveness. He prayed that even those who had deliberately marred His happiness should be held in love by the Father. There is no condition, no limitation. Nor is this all. His prayer was not merely the expression of benevolence; it contained a rational explanation. There is nothing arbitrary about it. These enemies were to be forgiven because they did not know, did not understand, — they were really not to blame. Poor, pitiful men! they thought that He had come to destroy religion and to ruin His country. The mistake was horrible, but it was a mistake. Forgiveness made Him pity His murderers, even while He read the sorrow, which their guilt had caused, on His mother's face. That is forgiveness indeed.

II. *His Forgiveness of Sin against God*

Though the forgiveness of which I have spoken indicates the character of the man, Jesus of Nazareth, it also tells an abounding message of the character of God, whose Life is revealed in the Life of Jesus. But there are other acts in Christ's Life which more directly interpret the divine forgiveness.

1. When Jesus knew that a soul was penitent, He risked all chance of being called a blasphemer, and pronounced the sins of that person forgiven. When

[1] Commentators essentially agree that this could not refer to the Roman soldiers, but to His *real* enemies.

Zacchæus, the flinty, dishonest tax-collector, announced his intention to be honest, and to restore all ill-won money, Christ said, "To-day is salvation come to this house."[1] That was an assurance of forgiveness. When the woman, who had once been very bad, showed her mingled love and sorrow by washing the Saviour's feet with her tears, Christ said definitely, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven."[2] When, one day, four men brought a man sick of the palsy into a crowded house, that Jesus might heal him, He greeted the sick man with the words: "Son, thy sins are forgiven."[3] The condensed account of the story says that Jesus said this because He saw the faith of these men. The way that He saw that faith is everything. We may only surmise it; but we must imagine something of it. Was the man on the bed a man whose face told first of a reckless past, and then told — what many faces tell after long illness — that in the long watches of the night the soul behind that face had been drawing nearer and nearer to God, had been understanding His Love, had been wishing vaguely, intensely for a means to live another kind of life than that poor threadbare life of the past? I do not mean to intimate that anyone might have read that pathetic, beautiful story; but I feel sure that the story was there for the eyes of Jesus to read. And so He said first what the invalid wished more than health — He said that his past was blotted from the books of God.

Just one more instance: at the end of all, when Christ and the thieves were on the crosses at Calvary, He

[1] St. Luke xix. 9. [2] St. Luke vii. 47. [3] St. Mark ii. 5.

said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." [1] None of these people, so far as we can tell, had committed any injury to the man Jesus. When He forgave them, therefore, He spoke for the Father in heaven. He was forgiving men's sins as God forgives sins. The condition was the condition illustrated in the Parable of the Prodigal Son: however wasted, however bad, life might have been, to turn to go to the Father meant that the Father would at once turn to greet the penitent with all the tenderness of a father's love.

2. It is natural to ask what this forgiveness accomplished in the penitent. No better answer can be found than in the story of the woman taken in great sin and brought to Christ for judgment. Her guilt was certain. If she had been hard and bitter, to stand in the presence of Jesus must have brought tender and white desires into her soiled heart. She must have studied His face to see what such a Man, so unlike any she had ever seen before, would say of her. To be condemned by one so considerate, so brilliantly kind, would be awful. She must have longed for a new life! At last He said, "I do not condemn thee: go, and sin no more." [2]

Here, I think, we have the indication of what happened to those whom Christ forgave: they had power "to go, and sin no more." When this woman saw in the Saviour's face the hideous character of her sin, because it awakened there such pity, we cannot suppose that she stopped to think of the consequences of her evil past. That the respectable should continue

[1] St. Luke xxiii. 43. [2] St. John viii. 11.

to sneer, that they should forbid their children to touch her, that they should refuse to be in the same room with her, — all this was then a very small matter, bitter as it was. What she wished to be rid of, then, was the *sin*. She wished the hideous desire to fade away. She wished the power to resist every temptation. The pity of the Saviour's face, the chance of gaining His approving smile in the end, — this memory, this ambition, should go with her. That day, by the Saviour's forgiveness, her sins, which had been scarlet, became white as snow. We may believe that Christ's forgiveness did for the souls of Palestine what His healing touch did for weary bodies: it stopped the course of sin, as His touch checked disease.

3. A very anxious question is whether Christ placed any limit to His forgiveness, and thereby, as a consequence, to God's forgiveness. He did place such a limit, in the sin against the Holy Spirit.[1] This, He said, could be forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come. What this sin is, we cannot say definitely; but the Christian consciousness is practically unanimous in ascribing it to such persistent refusal to yield to God's love, under full and wide knowledge of that love, that the soul is hardened beyond any possible change. The best, most loving appeal has been made and rejected. Nothing more *can* be offered. Should this persistent "Prodigal Son" turn in the last eternity, "the Loving Father" will surely come to meet him even then. But the horror of this sin is that by its nature it never can have the desire or the will to start. By its own self-won

[1] St. Matt, xii. 32.

coldness and hardness it has shut itself out from the sunshine, from love, from God.

With this exception, the forgiveness of Jesus Christ on earth gives us the most unbounded hope for the ultimate plans of God. How far God will come to meet a returning humanity we know by His Love revealed in the Cross.

CHAPTER IX

His Scorn

BECAUSE Christ was the tender physician in the presence of all degraded people who admitted the sickness of their souls, because He was patient and forgiving with many of the worst types of humanity, there has come to be a feeling that He was always tenderness, and that the Lamb is the only symbol of His character. To this end many passages in the records of His Life are softened, or altogether explained away. Such violence to the documents is not only unscientific, it is irreverent. We must face the facts as history records them. He was not always gentle: He was often fierce as the lightning.

It is quite certain that He had no personal anger; that is, He did not resent insults or wrongs done to Him as an individual man. But in so far as opposition to Him kept men from the happy life to which He tried to lead His people, He did resent men's opposition. The resentment was official. Moreover, as we shall see, the resentment was often against those whom He loved; and, so, though it was, in a real sense, anger, anger is perhaps not the best word to describe His attitude. It was never that slow, sullen rage, which often is suggested by the word "anger"; but

was always a quick, fiery intensity, by its very brilliance and heat calculated to burn the sin to ashes. For these reasons the best word available is *scorn.*

In the attempt to disclaim for Christ any wrath against persons, it has sometimes been argued that this scorn was for the sin rather than the sinner. The sophistry of such a distinction was as far as possible from our Lord's spirit. If sin was disowned by its victim, Christ counted it separated; but if the sin was cherished, tolerated, Christ counted it identical with the sinner. His resentment, His contempt, His anger, His scorn, was for the concrete, personal sinners of His day, not merely for any abstracted qualities which hung about their lives.

People who think that they follow Christ, sometimes become insensible to sin through an exaggerated tenderness for bad people. They reach the depth described by the Psalmist, "Neither do they abhor anything that is evil." [1] Because bad men are tolerated, excused, their villanous influence spreads. Christ was as a surgeon, cutting evil men out of the great organism of humanity, to check the process of death. Because His pity was not soft, but strong, He was pitiless to the man who barred the progress of Life to the whole human system. It is possible so to emasculate Christianity that its neglect to destroy sin is more than its power to build up righteousness. The writer who did most to reform English life in the nineteenth century was not Thomas Carlyle who wrote violently of sins, but was Charles Dickens who

[1] Ps. xxxvi. 4.

wrote vividly of living, concrete sinners. The schoolmaster Squeers, the nurse Mrs. Gamp, the employer Mr. Pecksniff, the ruffian Sikes, and a host of other evil persons were held up for hatred; people came to a sense of the blackness of the crimes which made human nature bestial, and public opinion rose to great reform. Into his open grave in the Abbey the poor threw flowers continuously for one whole day; because he had forced men to hate and depose the sinners who had been allowed to make miserable the weak and defenceless. Nor, in such connection, can we forget that superb force for righteousness, Thomas Arnold. It was said that many an Englishman hurled back temptation in the thick of public life because he remembered how as a boy he had seen the face of Dr. Arnold flash disgust and scorn in the presence of any person who had done a mean or a low act. The tempted man's imagination brought to mind how Dr. Arnold would look upon him, his once loved pupil, now identified with such sin — he saw again the indignant gaze, the anger, and the contempt — and so, with that memory, he dropped the temptation, he kept himself unspotted. Surely, we need to remember that the most gracious Saviour, who had only pity for Zacchæus and the Magdalen, had the most burning scorn for certain types of sinful persons, — the persons who drag down humanity, and, so far as they can, blot out the kingdom of heaven. We need not try to explain away or even tone down the invectives and the curses: they are part of His redeeming love for humanity, and must be studied just as they stand in the narrative.

I. *Against Tempters*

Christ had very evident scorn for those who consciously or unconsciously tempted men from the right. He expressed this scorn not only when people tried to turn Him from His Messianic duty, but also when He saw that His earnest followers were being beguiled from "the way."

1. However we interpret the experience of the Temptation in the Wilderness, we must feel, from the description, that Christ repelled with anger any person who could deliberately tempt Him to swerve from His God-given task.[1] We have definite confirmation of it in His attitude toward the deliberate schemes of the Pharisees to trap Him into a false step. When He was in the synagogue one Sabbath day, the Pharisees pushed forward a man with a withered hand; and, with the hope of snaring Him between legalism and mercy, asked Him whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath.[2] Jesus quickly healed the man, but before He did so He "looked round about on them with anger."[3] So it was on many occasions.[4]

But Christ was also seriously indignant at people who, with no hostile motive, tended to make His course less straight. When He was speaking to a great multitude, one day, His mother and His brethren, unable to get near Him, because of the crowd, sent word that they wished to see Him. Whatever ex-

[1] St. Matt. iv. 10. [2] St. Matt. xii. 10. [3] St. Mark iii. 5.

[4] *E.g.*, St. Matt. xvi. 1. This "temptation" was to use a miracle to justify His own individual dignity, — a temptation to which He never yielded.

planation be given to their message, it is clear that they used their appeal to family obligations, to divert Him from His mission. Evidently it was a tempting appeal. For His words of rejection are sharp and stern; He had duties to the larger family of humanity: "Whosoever shall do the will of God the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." [1] Again, when His very dear friend, Simon Peter, rebuked Him for talking of a tragic end, — thus intensifying a natural shrinking from it in His own heart, — Christ vehemently turned upon him, saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan." [2] That is scorn at white heat. He repelled not only the temptation, but the man who dared to suggest it.

2. When Christ spoke of those who neither went into the kingdom themselves, nor suffered those who were entering to go in, He called such tempters of their fellows by strong epithets, and uttered His woe against them.[3] He spurned them for their meanness: "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge," He said, "ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering ye hindered." [4] One wonders if sentences like these have not some hidden allusion to the fate of His disciple and friend, Judas, whose cupidity was being appealed to by the high priests; these priests thereby tempted Judas to his ruin, — Judas, the man who was so close to the highest and brightest in earth and heaven. These enemies of light turned the key on Judas, and shut him out — with themselves.

The purity and splendour of such indignation we

[1] St. Mark iii. 35. [2] St. Mark viii. 33.
[3] St. Matt. xxiii. 13. [4] St. Luke xi. 52.

feel when we see the face of a mother who has discovered that to her boy, hitherto unspotted from the world, some villain is holding out the temptation to depart from righteousness. There are men who take a fiendish pleasure in watching the unspoiled life make its first timid plunge into gross sin. They are the tempters of innocence. The mother who discovers that such a malign personality is approaching her beloved has the right of a tigress to spring upon this murderer of her child's soul. Tenderness has its limit: there comes a time for scorn, for hatred. When the youth sees the horror on his mother's face, he will know at last how loathsome is his tempter, — and he will be saved. "It must needs be," said Christ, "that occasions of stumbling come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh![1] . . . Better for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea."[2]

II. *Against Hypocrites*

Christ was especially vigorous in His denunciation of hypocrites. From various passages, notably the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, it is easy to discover His definition of hypocrites. They made strict rules, — and left others to keep them.[3] They were highly scrupulous about their appearance, — dress, position, titles,[4] long prayers,[5] payment of tithes,[6] ceremonial,[7] subscriptions to memorials,[8] —

[1] St. Matt. xviii. 7. [2] *Ibid.* 6. [3] St. Matt. xxiii. 4.
[4] *Ibid.* 5. 6, 7. [5] St. Mark xii. 40.
[6] St. Matt. xxiii. 23. [7] *Ibid.* 25. [8] *Ibid.* 29.

but quite deficient in humility,[1] generosity,[2] sincerity,[3] judgment, mercy, faith,[4] commonsense,[5] purity,[6] — that is, in all the interior virtues of life.

While they were setting up such a pretence of piety they were devouring widows' houses;[7] and by the twist of a tradition they snapped their fingers at the obligation of the Fifth Commandment and left their aged parents to cold and want.[8] They depended so far upon a dead past that they could not understand the living Christ. God was to them essentially dead. They dreaded any present, living manifestation of His authority which could interfere with their shibboleths and rules. Above all they were, with all their "piety," unkind. They were the most unreal of mortals.

On these people our Saviour poured out the vials of His wrath. He called them "fools and blind,"[9] "blind guides,"[10] "unclean,"[11] "whited sepulchres,"[12] "serpents," "generation of vipers."[13] He exposed them to biting sarcasm as He pictured them standing up and offering to remove motes from other people's eyes, — when in their own eyes there were beams.[14] And the "woe," "woe," "woe," of His invective falls with the force and regularity of a bludgeon. If ever people were cursed, Christ cursed the hypocrites. The cursing of the promising but fruitless fig-tree[15] removes the last doubt, if any could exist, upon our

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 12.
[2] *Ibid.* 13.
[3] *Ibid.* 16 f.
[4] *Ibid.* 23.
[5] *Ibid.* 24.
[6] *Ibid.* 27.
[7] St. Mark xii. 40.
[8] St. Matt. xv. 4–6.
[9] St. Matt. xxiii. 19.
[10] *Ibid.*, 24.
[11] *Ibid.*, 25.
[12] *Ibid.*, 27.
[13] *Ibid.* 33.
[14] St. Luke vi. 41–42.
[15] St. Mark xi. 14.

Lord's estimate of the hypocrite. He said quite definitely to such men, "How shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" [1]

A large share of the disgust roused by the recent investigations of the great Insurance Companies comes from the fact that these trustees of enormous funds, who have been using them for their own crooked and selfish ends, have been appealing piously to the thrifty wage-earners of the country so to deposit their savings that, should death overtake them, their widows and their orphans might be provided for. "Deny yourselves in the present," is the pathetic cry of the Insurance tract, "to make safe the future of your families." Very proper language, this, had these officers of insurance companies really cared for working-men, widows, and orphans; but hideous and contemptible jargon, if these pleaders turned from their tracts, with an amused twinkle at their own astuteness, to vote themselves outrageously high salaries, to pension the members of their families, to buy up legislators, and otherwise to contribute to their own wealth and power. The mere villany is bad enough, — but it is all intensified with the rankling remembrance of the philanthropic pamphlets sent out by these would-be benefactors of mankind. A villain who is a hypocrite is an arch-villain. If a man is a plain straightforward murderer, the world is content with a legal penalty; but when it is the kiss of a Judas that starts the crime, the world never forgets. And no one dare say that the world in such a mood is un-Christian.

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 33.

III. *Against the Hard-hearted*

Another class of men upon whom Christ vented His scorn were the hard-hearted. These too, for the most part seem to have been Pharisees. They shut their lives into so hard a case of stubbornness and prejudice that no truth or persuasion could penetrate to their hearts. They came then to have what has been called "the ossified heart." [1]

The particular form of hard-heartedness on which Jesus most frequently seemed to dwell is the unwillingness to forgive a personal injury. "If ye," He said, "forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." [2] This very explicit condemnation He vividly emphasised by the parable of the servant who, having been released from a large debt by his employer, turned about and refused to allow any time to a fellow servant who owed him, and angrily cast him into prison. The master of the two servants, hearing of this hard-heartedness, "was wroth" with the man whom he had just forgiven, withdrew his kindness, and turned him over "to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due." "So," concluded Jesus, "shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." [3]

When the Saviour sent the Twelve out to preach in the cities and villages, He directed them to treat the self-complacent people who rejected their message, with the utmost scorn. "Whosoever," He said,

[1] A phrase used by F. W. Robertson. [2] St. Matt. vi. 15.
[3] St. Matt. xviii. 23–35.

"shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony against them.[1] Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."[2] Later, when He Himself was ignored by certain towns, He uttered His woes against them: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." [This demonstrates the flintiness of their hearts. Now the result:] "Howbeit I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you."[3] It is difficult to separate such stinging sentences from a curse.

This scorn for hard-heartedness is perhaps most clear in the Fourth Gospel, particularly in the fiery dialogue between Christ and the prejudiced opponents which is recorded in the eighth chapter. "Ye are of your father the devil," He cried, "and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. . . . He is a liar, and the father thereof."[4] His vituperation, as well as His assumption of authority, so incensed them that they took up stones to kill Him.[5] His words must have been exceedingly bitter.

At last, in the Garden of Gethsemane, they who had listened gratefully to Him in the Temple, and whose

[1] St. Mark vi. 11; St. Matt. x. 15; St. Luke ix. 5.
[2] St. Matt. x. 15.
[3] St. Matt. xi. 21, 22. So also *Ibid.* 23, 24.
[4] St. John viii. 44. [5] *Ibid.* 59.

dear ones had possibly been healed by His power, were among those who came to arrest Him. The scorn must have been no less intense because subdued. "Are ye come out," He said, "as against a thief, with swords and staves to seize me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not." [1] That scorn evidently had its lightning effect, for even the Roman soldiers were frightened by the blaze of it.[2]

IV. *Against the Worldly*

A large number of Christ's words indicate His scorn of those who were altogether worldly,[3] or who tried to be both worldly and religious. "Go and tell that fox," was the preface to a message to Herod.[4] "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," [5] He said to the wavering. With a ringing contempt, He described the people who could cleverly read the signs of the weather, but had no eyes for the signs of a great religious opportunity.[6] The same quick anger is displayed in the lesson of the parable of the prosperous farmer who tore down his barns to build greater, saying cheerfully to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

[1] St. Mark xiv. 48, 49. [2] St. John xviii. 6.

[3] *Cf.* Mr. A. C. Benson's "Upton Letters," p. 159: "Mr. Welbore, as a matter of fact, seems to me really to augur worse for the introduction of the kingdom of heaven upon earth than any number of drunkards and publicans. One feels that the world is so terribly strong, stronger even than sin." The whole description of "Mr. Welbore" — the type of the thoroughly worldly man — is an apt illustration of the insidious peril of worldliness.

[4] St. Luke xiii. 32. [5] St. Matt. vi. 24.

[6] St. Luke xii. 54–57.

Then the scorn: God said, "Thou fool, this night is thy soul required of thee." [1]

Christ's scorn for the worldly-minded was also shown by definite acts. The saving of the Gadarene demoniacs by destroying a herd of swine belonging to Gadara,[2] receives its clearest explanation when it is interpreted as an act of scornful censure for a band of people who cared more for property than for human souls. The fact that later the citizens of Gadara besought him to go away before He blessed any more suffering friends and relatives, at their petty cost, shows how much they needed such a judgment.[3] But the most distinct illustration of His scorn of the worldly is seen in His driving the money-changers out of the Temple. He upset their tables, and threw down their chairs. He made a scourge of cords and drove out the traffickers and their cattle.[4] And He cried after them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' — but ye have made it a den of robbers." [5]

Yet we cannot forget that it was the worldly Zacchæus who became His friend, — only Zacchæus first discarded his worldliness. Christ never tolerated the worldly spirit.

It must be kept in mind always that the Master who had moments of such anger and scorn was, notwithstanding, first of all tender, loving. Only the love was not soft, flabby, but had all the elements of a complete strength. It was organic. There was justice in it.

[1] St. Luke xii. 18–21. [2] St. Luke viii. 32. [3] *Ibid.*, 37.
[4] St. John ii. 13. [5] St. Luke xix. 46.

The servant who stubbornly laid his lord's talent away in a napkin was stripped of his little all;[1] and the servant who tried hard and did his best was rewarded. Just as the merciful schoolmaster detects the hopelessly bad boy and sends him away from his privileges, lest, remaining in the school, he drag others down to his own infamy; so the merciful Christ rejected the tempter, the hypocrite, the hard-hearted, the worldly, from His kingdom. One of His parables concluded, "These mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me:" make that as figurative as you must, there will yet be the illustration of the Saviour's words: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword."[2] Some men feeling the heat of His scorn must have come to a sense of their condition. For the scorn of a perpetual blusterer does not hurt; what does hurt is the scorn of the gentle, the kind, the loving. Tares and wheat in Christ's kingdom were allowed to grow together till the harvest, but there was no ignoring of the tares. And their fate was made certain, by His words, by His acts.

Jesus Christ was real to the last degree. Because He longed to give Love to all men, He gave it to the frailest sinner who would turn to Him even a little. But for those who steeled themselves against His influence, and by their traits barred others from His influence, He had only a consuming indignation. And thereby His love was not limited, but fulfilled; for it

[1] St. Matt. xxv. 26.

[2] St. Matt. x. 34.

passed through these uncompromising natures and became a burning scorn.[1]

How far His followers dare discriminate, it is difficult to tell. The Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, the persecution of Salem Witches, tell a various story of failure. But in every great city human devils are bartering immortal souls; and to almost every loving Christian, who is awake, there comes the call, "If thou hast no sword, sell thy coat and buy one."[2] But it is safer to keep the swords sheathed for the most part; giving our neighbours only the love when in doubt, because we cannot see with the certain clearness of our Master. We may, alas! like Peter, cut off the ear of some Malchus, and need to pray the Saviour to come and heal the wound. On the other hand, we can be candid with *ourselves*, and measure exactly the

[1] *Cf.* Dr. D. W. Forrest ("The Authority of Christ," pp. 168 f.): "When, indeed, we compare that intercession for pardon with these reiterated 'woes,' no contrast could externally be greater. Yet the same holy lips spake them both: they were alike the expression of One who lived in, and reflected, the Father. In this centre He dwelt: and from it His life radiated forth, adapting itself to the manifold variety of human condition; sometimes gentle with a surpassing charm, or grave with an exacting demand, or wrapt in a mysterious aloofness. Not uniformity, but diversity, is its outward characteristic. He represses, encourages, warns, upbraids, consoles; flashes out the truth now at one angle, now at another; speaks the word needful for the moment without any qualification, and again utters its complement with an equal emphasis. Hence the apparent contradictions in His sayings are innumerable. . . . Yet they have the profoundest unity at the heart, and their true meaning can never be understood till they are interpreted from within. He did not speak by rule, but according to the dictates of a loving spirit, which read with unerring insight the necessities of the hour."

[2] St. Matt. x. 34; St. Luke xxii. 36.

attitude which Christ will have for any of those qualities in *us* which once He faced on earth with terrible scorn. He was fierce as only the Gentlest can be fierce. There is no paradox between His forgiveness and His anger: only completeness, in love.

CHAPTER X

His Compassion

OF the recorded events of Christ's Life about thirty-five[1] indicate supernatural power. We call them miracles. Some of them, especially the acts of healing, people imagine can be explained by some hypnotic influence more or less natural.[2] Others are altogether beyond all known laws of which we have any intimation.

Originally the miracles were aids to belief in Christ's divinity. They were counted as the credentials of His authority. With the rebirth of Science they became an increasing stumbling-block to faith. The facile argument was that a God of Law would not be revealed in a Man who went about setting laws aside or breaking them. So even theologians ceased to put the old emphasis on Miracles: our Lord's credentials rested, for them, in His words, in His character, in the

[1] Bishop Westcott's "Study of the Gospels," Appendix E.

[2] *Cf.* Principal W. Jones-Davies (Hibbert Journal, July, 1906, p. 934): "Not many years ago *all* Christ's miracles were regarded by extreme critics as myths and fabrications. But through the discovery of hypnotism and auto-suggestion the greater number of them have become rationally credible. Is it too much to suggest that, by further patience in research, laws will be discovered to which other of the recorded miracles might be referred?"

uniqueness of His influence for all generations and scattered peoples. These theologians ordinarily did not deny miracles; they simply did not push them to the place of prominence which they had hitherto occupied. Now, with our study of hypnotism, with our societies for psychological and psychic research, with our increasing vision of the untrod avenues of science, with a growing suspicion that medical science is but beginning, we are prone to say that he is foolhardy who tries to limit the laws of God to any phenomena which we ordinarily see and understand. So the Miracles of the Gospel are no longer disowned by clever scientists. If the historic evidence is sufficient, science says, they are not in themselves incredible.[1] And theology insists as never before that God is a God of Law: only because human knowledge and power are both exceedingly limited, there are certainly laws which we must call superhuman, and when employed by one who, though human, is more than human, these laws must, of necessity, receive the name supernatural. Nothing is gained, however, by a struggle for or against the term supernatural. The words natural and supernatural are but signals of our enormous egotism. If we understand a law or a process or a phenomenon we call it natural; if we do not understand it, we call it supernatural. To the man in the tropics it seems a miracle that water should ever grow solid enough to be walked upon, the story of it seems to him supernatural; but once he has been carried to a northern winter he says that water, so hardened, seems to him perfectly natural. So the line between

[1] "Life and Letters of Thomas H. Huxley," II. pp. 297 ff.

natural and supernatural is changed for all of us with growing experience or modest intuition.[1]

The miracles of Christ therefore stand or fall upon the trustworthiness of the Gospel records. As a scrupulous, unsparing criticism sifts both internal and external evidence, it becomes harder, day by day, to impugn the historic evidence for miracles. He is a belated scholar who allows himself to approach the subject of miracles with a prejudice against their credibility; and it must be granted that most of the attacks have not been in the realm of history, but simply in the realm of *a priori* prejudice. To-day men, rid of this prejudice, are observing in the records the numerous theories by which contemporary witnesses attempted to explain the miracles. Christ's friends thought His mind affected; Herod thought Him John Baptist risen from the dead; the Pharisees thought Him in league with evil spirits; and when the man born blind, was made to see, these same Pharisees tried to make the man say that he had not really been blind. "Men do not theorise about nothing," said Alexander Bruce. "When theories arise, something has occurred that arrests attention and demands explanation." [2]

[1] An interesting example of this appears in the account of the miracles of the middle ages. A critic who investigated them said that he found one miracle which was credible. That was of a martyr who, having his tongue cut out, spoke and praised God. It was counted a miracle, and the critic said that it was well-authenticated. Then, a few years ago, it was discovered by physiologists that if the tongue were *entirely* cut out a man could speak. So people pushed the line between the natural and the supernatural a little farther up.

[2] "With Open Face," p. 34.

So the Miracles are being freed from their old shackles and stand to-day as a witness to a great trait in the character of Christ. The question is no longer, "Did He have such power?" History, taking a silent science by the hand, says that He *did* have what we call supernatural power. The only question, and the significant question, is, "How did He use it?" We have already seen that He was repeatedly tempted to use it for His own comfort or safety; and that He invariably refused so to use it. He used it always for others. But He often refused to use it even for others, — when, for instance, the Pharisees asked Him for a sign. It is always dangerous to summarise[1] under a general name any great class of acts; but if one were to select one trait which the Miracles chiefly set forth in Christ's character, that trait would be compassion. Compassion for others made Him exert this superhuman power at times when its exercise was for Himself most dangerous; and it was, without doubt, one of the causes contributing to the crisis which ended in the Crucifixion.

[1] In this classification I make no provision for the so-called miracle of "the Stater in the Fish's Mouth" (St. Matthew xvii. 24–27). There seems no sound reason for believing that anything more is meant than that the fish, being sold, would provide the price of the tax. The expression — "finding the stater in the fish's mouth" — would be no stronger than many another common Orientalism. Moreover, there is no record of a literal fulfilment of the prediction; and even if it were fulfilled it would be classed as a case of prophetic foreknowledge rather than as a case of miraculous working. Besides all this, that such a miracle would be unique in our Saviour's career is sufficient ground for accepting the modern exegesis.

I. *His Compassion for Sickness*

Of Christ's recorded Miracles, twenty-one were for the relief of the sick in mind or body. For in whatever way we explain "possession by demons," such possession amounted at least to the tortures of cruel illness. That three fifths of His recorded miracles had to do with physical suffering is eloquent testimony to His sympathy with the pain, lassitude, or limitations of our common sicknesses. The blind saw; the deaf heard; those afflicted with chronic or acute disease were well in an instant; the people who seemed to be in the condition of our insane of to-day became normal. Sometimes the suffering was intense, sometimes it seems to have been more or less unconscious endurance — as in the case of the man born blind.[1]

The recorded acts of healing are evidently only a fraction of this sort of miracles which Jesus performed. In a career, short at best, in which His chief work was to organise the world under the conscious constraint and inspiration of a Father of Love, He turned aside into every lane and hedgerow to help those in stupour or pain. And His purpose was so distinctly compassionate that He ordinarily warned the healed man to make no announcement of His act. If these constant acts of healing brought His fame among simple folk to such a pitch that they talked wildly of making Him Cæsar, and thus cut short His career; so the precious time of that short career was given in very large measure to obscure sufferers, — and thus the time for what seems to us teaching of transcendent importance was

[1] St. John ix.

crowded to days of flight to the wilderness with the Twelve, or to night conversations on the mountain. The heart of Jesus Christ was so filled with compassion that no human cry of lack or pain went by His ear unheeded.

II. *His Compassion for Poverty*

The Twelve evidently distributed alms to the poor under the Lord's direction; but the two recorded instances when He did a miracle to feed a multitude show even more clearly His attitude to poverty. How He would relieve want in order to build up a habit of self-reliance; how He might, for the same cause, refuse to help — just as He refused to give a "sign" to the Pharisees — these and other questions are legitimate speculations. But the one fact to fix upon here is that the miracles of feeding the two multitudes show Christ's compassion for those who had physical hunger and were unable to satisfy it. In both cases[1] there was evidently not so much lack of forethought on the part of the people as there was eagerness to avail themselves of the Master's teaching and His healing of their sick. In one case the day had worn to a close; in the second case, three days had passed, without their having anything to eat. So He said that He had "compassion on the multitude."[2] He who felt the pangs of hunger in the wilderness after His long season of spiritual ecstasy gave to the poor hungry crowds swarming over the wastes His full

[1] St. Matt. xiv. 13–23; xv. 32–38.
[2] St. Mark vi. 34; viii. 2; St. Matt. xv. 32.

sympathy. He did not preach to them of their improvidence; He did not fall in with His disciples' suggestion to send them away. He used His supernatural power, and fed them. So we know to-day His compassion for the poor and hungry.

III. *His Compassion for Sorrow*

Three instances are recorded of Christ's raising the dead: a girl,[1] a young man,[2] and an intimate friend.[3] In none of these cases can we feel that the resurrection was for the sake of the individual so raised. Our faith in a progressive future life forbids us to deplore, for the man himself, the passing of a soul into the other world. These miracles were evidently miracles of compassion; but the compassion was for the parents of the girl; for the mother of the young man; for the sisters of the dear friend. He who of all men had most right to philosophise about sorrow and explain it away, did not so treat it. He must have recognised that there are moments so black that all words fall impotent, — so black that God seems to be dead. Perhaps at other times He restored the dead to their loved ones; these three cases are sufficient to illustrate His invariable attitude toward such grief. It not only brought tender words, tears, groans, — it also brought the exercise of His heavenly power. He had the very depths of compassion for the sorrowful.

IV. *His Compassion for Discouragement and Fear*

It is easy, perhaps, to imagine how one with supernatural power should use it for great illness and for

[1] St. Mark v. 22 ff. [2] St. Luke vii. 11 ff. [3] St. John xi.

the relief of dense sorrow, but the wonder increases as the records show that Christ granted His compassion to commonplace aspects of human trouble.

To the disciples, discouraged over long, unrewarded toil at their fishing, He twice granted a miraculous draught of fishes.[1] At another time when the disciples were toiling in rowing, against a strong wind,[2] His loving care and sympathy made Him go out upon the waves to be near them. When, the wine having given out, disgrace was imminent upon the host at Cana, He saved the chagrin and shame by turning water to wine.[3] When the disciples were caught in a sudden lake storm, and cried out in fear, He stilled the tempest at a word.[4] Discouragement and fear are not always dignified — they sometimes make their victims seem as weak and inefficient as they are miserable. To such difficulties Christ gave neither indifference nor harshness; by great supernatural acts of help, He gave His compassion.

V. *His Compassion for Doubt*

The attitude of so-called religious people toward doubt is often stern and forbidding. Christ, coming with the majesty of self-evident authority, nevertheless deigned to give His followers external helps to faith. Many of the miracles which seem to have been primarily for some other purpose included also this stimulus to firmer faith; as, for example, when Christ, having forgiven the paralytic, turned to the scandalised Scribes, with the remark that He would now heal the

[1] St. Luke v. 1–11; St. John xxi. 1–23.
[2] St. Mark vi. 48 ff. [3] St. John ii. 1–12. [4] St. Mark iv. 35 ff.

invalid so that all present might know what sort of strength He had to give.[1] As He relieved the man of his misery He also inspired faith in higher things. So, too, the raising of Lazarus came at a moment when the Twelve needed all possible reassurance as they faced with Him the week of the Passion.

But there are three miracles which stand out as miracles to help doubt. The Transfiguration came almost with the first recorded announcement of His tragic end; and even in the blaze of Transfiguration light the cruel death in Jerusalem was one of the subjects of which the glorious ones talked. That which was hardest for the Twelve to grasp, the three dearest friends were helped to understand by seeing in divine glory Him who was to die like a common thief, — and the glory and the ignominy were joined in one divine forecast. The memory of that bright scene was to help them to escape from the blackness of an awful doubt.[2]

The Tuesday before the terrible Friday, the disciples saw the fig-tree (cursed the day before) withered away. And Jesus said to them, as they called His attention to it, "Have faith in God."[3] No men's faith was ever put to such a test as theirs, just as no men ever had such complete reason for faith. The Lord fortified their faith, and gently pushed away the doubts, at every step.

Finally, the great miracle of all is the Resurrection. That Christ should rise was inevitable; that He appeared "unto many" was part of His gracious compassion for the doubts of His disciples and of succeeding

[1] St. Mark ii. 10. [2] St. Mark ix. 9, 10, 12. [3] St. Mark xi. 22.

generations. He had said, "Because I live, ye shall live also."[1] That, with His unquenchable vitality, ought really to be enough confirmation of our best hopes. But we all have some of the longing of a Thomas to prove great assertions. So, having risen, He appeared to one after another, — to the sceptical Thomas as to the trusting John. From this aspect the miracle of the Resurrection becomes the crowning act of compassion for what is often the wildest form of agony and despair, — that is, doubt of any reality beyond the last earthly farewell.

The natural question that must follow any such reflection is somewhat harrowing: "Why," it may be asked, "does not God show a like compassion for various kinds of human trouble to-day?" We look at the hungry, — and they go unfed. We think of the ghastly forms in starving India, or wherever else famine may put its blight. We think of the blind, — who remain in darkness; of the mourners, — who remain bereaved; of the bed-ridden, — who never take one step. Why such unparalleled privileges, we echo, for the people of Christ's day?

It is a hard question. On the surface it seems a crushing objection to the consideration of miracles as deeds of compassion. But there are two sound answers.

1. It is well to recall that all through history there have been privileged ages. It was a finer thing to live in Greece in the days of Pericles than in the days of Demosthenes; or in England under Elizabeth than

[1] St. John xiv. 19.

under King John. And not only are there privileged ages, there are also privileged places. The man who falls sick of a fever in a tropical wilderness, far from a skilful hand, dies; the same man, equally ill, in London is likely to be healed at once by the wise physician. So Christ's age was the privileged age of history; and to be near Him was the most privileged of places. May we not say, then, in a very practical way, that God has always permitted those to be delivered who have come into the presence of the power or the skill which was able to deliver them? The amazing skill of many a physician and surgeon is Christ's way of giving help to the suffering to-day, and that help is often given as freely, as ungrudgingly, as Christ gave His power to the poor of His own generation.

2. We must say, for God's compassion, that God is not unjust to other generations because He was supremely kind to a single generation. There is a good phrase sometimes used to describe one of God's laws, — "God's Economy."[1] There is economy in history. The miracles are not repeated because they are not necessary. In the lifetime of Jesus they served to tell of God's love; and no one can reasonably doubt the lesson to-day. Forces of heaven and earth were used to do what is now beyond our power; and they were used neither to coerce nor to frighten men; they were used only to give men confidence in God's compassion. The Lord Jesus swept the clouds of experience aside for a moment, and men were allowed to gaze upon the deeper realities. Pain is hard to

[1] I here use "economy" in the ordinary sense, and not, *e.g.*, in the sense of Cyril of Alexandria.

bear: we all know that. No gracious Jesus is seen on our streets to bid it begone at a touch; but, — and this is everything, — the invisible Jesus is right at hand to say, "Remember my life in Palestine. Remember my lesson. Behind the pain is love. Not to-day, but soon, it shall be clear. I will have compassion, — I have compassion *now!*" What could be better than such a blessed assurance? Would we have the same great powers which Christ used in the control of any man to-day? Not for an instant! We dread to have any but an expert touch the great electric mechanism of modern science; how we should shudder to have anyone less than the Christ put his hand upon the hidden forces of awful might which the tenderness of Christ only could always conserve for help. We are as sure as we can ever be that the Law of God contains the heart of compassion: no demonstration could be clearer. If death comes, we wish to know that the beloved is happier than here: a Lazarus-like return for a few years is not in itself a great boon. Pain, toil, sorrow, doubt, melt into the light of God's consolation, when we remember how Jesus put His hand on pain like ours long ago in Palestine. We know, by such memory, that God's laws are not as an unpitying machine to grind us to dust and ashes; they lead at last to such compassion as men once saw in the miracles of the Man Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER XI

His Transforming Power

TO those who try to reduce the character of Christ to the ordinary human level there comes one obstacle which is insuperable, even for the most sceptical mood. The feeling of *a priori* necessity may dispose of all valid evidence for the extraordinary acts usually classed as miracles; yet there will be one miracle, — and that the greatest of all, — which no argument can touch. This is the miracle of the unique transforming power of Christ's influence. The evidence for this is not only found in the well-authenticated records of the past,[1] but can be seen in the flesh and blood of to-day. In the narrowest and most exact sense this is a miracle for which there can be scientific proof. With all his enormous conceit Napoleon felt how tiny his great influence was in

[1] *Cf.* Dr. E. von Dobschütz ("Christian Life in the Primitive Church," tr. G. Bremner, p. 379): "Neither of them [Stoicism and Neoplatonism] could enable artisans and old women to lead a truly philosophical life. Christianity could and did; the apologists point triumphantly to the realisation of the moral ideal among Christians of every standing. That was due to the power which issued from Jesus Christ and actually transformed men. The certainty and confidence of faith, based on Him . . . begot in Christians a matchless delight in doing good."

comparison: "I," he said, "can gain but a wavering influence over the men whose ear and eye I can catch; this man, vanished for eighteen hundred years, still holds the characters of men as in a vice."

We think it wonderful, when we go over a rough field of stubble in January, that in the early days of summer this same rough field by the labour of a farmer, assisted by a kind Providence, will be transformed into a rich and beautiful garden. We remember the boast of the Emperor Augustus that he found Rome brick and he left it marble. The man who made the journey from the Mississippi to the Pacific fifty years ago found only "a waste howling wilderness," with here and there a few roving barbarians; to-day the same traveller finds great cities as permanently built as London. All these transformations are wonderful; yet they are insignificant when you compare them with a man who, having what we call a fixed character, turns sharply about, and, through a steady but sure progress, becomes, under the influence of a Personality, an altogether different man. The power that can do that is beyond any natural law that we can comprehend. It is the manifestation of the divine Love in its most potent influence.

Before I speak of details it is wise to point out that this transforming power of Christ was deliberately exercised. There was nothing suggesting the merely unconscious influence of a holy character. We find Him passing by the cultivated, the learned, the refined, the saintly. He chose raw material — material that seemed hopelessly raw to the candid judges of His day. Yet to these most inefficient of untrained men He

cried, "Ye are the salt of the earth;[1] . . . ye are the light of the world;[2] . . . ye shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."[3] He consciously moulded men (who, without Him, would have been nobodies) into the most influential men whom the world (judging from existing results) has ever known.[4]

We can best judge what this transforming power was by examining two or three examples.

I. *The Transformation of Simon Peter*

From the Gospel narratives it is fairly clear who Simon, Andrew's brother, was, before he knew Christ. It is easy to imagine what sort of man he seemed to his friends and neighbours. They knew him doubtless as one easily roused to new enthusiasms, keen for each new hero in turn, impulsively defending each with words or blows, — and then forgetting or ignoring him according to whim or convenience. Perhaps they called him good-hearted, but they certainly named him unreliable, shifting, fickle. It is evident that, from the first, Jesus was drawn to him. He seems to have caught up Simon's enthusiasm at once and fused

[1] St. Matt. v. 13. [2] *Ibid.* 14. [3] *Ibid.* 48.

[4] *Cf.* Wernle's "Beginnings of Christianity" (tr. G. A. Bienemann), I. p. 107: "Jesus . . . Himself freed and strengthened the will more than any other in the history of the world. . . . He is able to demand all, because everything becomes possible through Him. . . . He enlarges the bounds of that which is possible in the domain of ethics, just as a discoverer in that of physics. Jesus' disciples were no heroes. His whole intercourse with them up to the denial of Peter is proof of that. And yet what a brave company Jesus made of them — a force strong enough to defy the world."

with it His gift of will. For, no sooner had Andrew presented him to Jesus, than Jesus cried, "Thou art Simon the Son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas — the Rock, the Unshakable, the Reliable." [1]

How the bystanders must have stared! Doubtless they would have smiled, had anyone else said such words; but we know that there was authority in the word of Christ, and they could only be astonished. One may suppose that they went home that night to tell their housemates that One who seemed to know had proclaimed the most fickle of men to be the most trustworthy, — and they marvelled how it could be.

Then the transformation began. Many a time the old character showed its traits, like the fainter and fainter rumble of the departing storm as the summer sunshine is driving it away. The audacious remarks at the announcement of the Passion and at the Transfiguration; the hot-headed and self-centred denial of Christ at the trial; the demand to know the duties of his friend John when he received Christ's resurrection commission,[2] — all these details show to us Simon rather than Peter. Even later than this, difficulty sprang up between him and St. Paul[3] because he retreated from the generous, Christlike position toward Gentile Christians when the narrower party in the Church waved their protests in his face. But these instances serve only to show that his transformation was gradual. Against them must be placed the long array of instances in which his new character was manifest, — in which he was no longer Simon, but the great St. Peter of Christian history. It was he who

[1] St. John i. 41. [2] St. John xxi. [3] Gal. ii. 12.

first acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ.[1] It was he who on the first Whitsunday spoke so boldly to great numbers of people that three thousand were, by his confidence and persuasion, brought to baptism.[2] Nor can we pass over the unvarying tradition that St. Peter was the organising force of the first days of the Church. His name has always stood side by side with St. Paul's as the great human medium through which the teaching and vitality of Christ were incorporated into the activity of the world.[3] There is more or less regret on the part of superficial critics that Christianity became organised into the increasingly definite Church; but no one questions that such a development did take place, and that it began so to develop at the start. Whether one like the tendency or not, there was such a tendency, and it became in an incredibly short time so powerful as a unifying force that even the worldly Constantine had to make terms with it, and use its organism to cement his crumbling empire. The transformed fisherman became a conspicuous leader in this mighty accomplishment.

[1] St. Mark viii. 29.

[2] Acts ii. 41. The attempts of men like Von Soden ("History of Early Christian Literature," p. 220) to discredit this fact show singularly little grasp. Many of these converts had doubtless come directly under Christ's influence; and St. Peter's burning words simply clinched the indefinite longings of their hearts.

[3] *Cf.* Professor C. von Weizsäcker ("Apostolic Age," tr. J. Millar, p. 14): "He [Peter] was unquestionably the first man in the Primitive Church. When Paul was converted to Christianity, . . . it was enough for him to meet with Peter. . . . He was anxious to make the acquaintance of the man in whom he saw the whole of contemporary Christianity."

How far such transforming power is from any other which history knows can be seen if one imagines a reformer to-day who would say to himself, "Behold, I will start a new kingdom on this earth into which all that is best and wisest shall come; and now, behold, I shall select some untrained labouring man in the fields yonder and I shall say, 'To you I entrust the task of carrying out my most cherished hopes; you shall be the one on whom I most depend.'" What, do you think, would become of that "kingdom"? How could the man be trained *de novo* for so mammoth a task? If one can imagine such a transformation one can see what happened when the Saviour committed the unreliable Simon to become the steadfast Peter, through whose firmness the Christian Church was to be started on its triumphant course.

It is perhaps futile to ask how such a transformation came about. Of course the real explanation lies in the character of Christ Himself; but there are two details which can be set forth with certainty. The first of these is Christ's persistent belief in Peter. He believed this Simon to have possibilities which would have been denied by Simon's nearest and dearest, most of all by Simon himself. Any one who has known the thrill of having a trusted and loved friend tell one that he has confidence that such and such a life is to be one's future, is aware, to some degree, what must have been Simon's exultation and perplexity. The joy of having a Master like Christ believe in him was of itself power to do. It is evidently what St. Paul meant by his exalted doctrine of justification by faith — a doctrine which declared that a man

could be so believed in by Christ that Christ's belief in the disciple should become the disciple's belief in himself. Simon now and then forgot who it was that he was becoming, and lapsed into the poor being that he had been. Then — not once, but many times — the Lord must have "turned and looked upon Peter"; so that Simon knew that he was not Simon, but Peter, in spite of all. Christ believed[1] in him through all his blundering, treachery, cowardice; and Peter, weeping, came back to a belief in himself. It was first of all the compelling belief of the wisest and most loving of Masters which transformed the character of Simon.

The other obvious element in this transformation was the grafting of Christ's life into the life of Peter. Consciously Christ gave His will, His vitality, into the disciple's weakness; and the strength of Christ became the strength of Peter. "Abide in me,"[2] He said; "I am the vine, ye are the branches";[3] "I am come that ye might have life . . . life more abundantly."[4] It is, as it were, a chemical change; a new substance is introduced into the wavering, flimsy character of the

[1] *Cf.* Professor F. G. Peabody's "Jesus Christ and Christian Character," p. 91: "When Washington at Valley Forge was reviewing his tattered troops, he paused before one feeble regiment and said, 'Gentlemen, I have great confidence in the men of Connecticut,' and the narrator says, 'When I heard that, I clasped my musket to my breast and said, "Let them come on."'" Professor Peabody quotes in this connection John Watson ("The Mind of the Master," p. 238): "An unwavering and unbounded faith in humanity sustained the heart [of Jesus] and transformed its objects. . . . With everything against Him, Jesus treated men as sons of God, and His optimism has had its vindication."

[2] St. John xv. 4. [3] St. John xv. 5. [4] St. John x. 10

follower, and his Master lives *in* him, and makes him to will and to do. St. Paul was not mystical, but scientific and literal, when he said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." [1] St. Peter must have said the same words over and over again. It was the Christ *in him* who transformed him.

II. *The Transformation of a Son of Zebedee*

To one who is confident that John the son of Zebedee is the author of the Fourth Gospel, there is absorbing interest in seeing from what source such a transcendent spiritual genius was evolved. If St. Peter, according to tradition, is associated with the organisation of the Church, the name of St. John is bound up with its spirituality, its emotions, its inmost heart and soul. There is less and less cause to question this tradition, as scholars return with their results.[2]

Since the accounts imply that Zebedee owned his boat and employed "hired servants," [3] we rightly infer that the sons of Zebedee were not of what are sometimes called the masses. Though in the Fourth Gospel the anonymous disciple (presumably St. John) is said to be known to the High Priest,[4] though the author seems to have special information about Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus, members of the Sanhedrin, there is nothing to make us feel that he is a

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

[2] A book like Von Soden's "History of Early Christian Literature" is more than offset by Sanday's "Criticism of the Fourth Gospel." Yet even Von Soden makes the author a close disciple of "the beloved disciple" — an eye-witness — "John the Elder." *Vide supra*, p. 24. [3] St. Mark i. 20. [4] St. John xviii. 15.

member of the aristocracy. It has even been suggested that his acquaintance was rather with the households of these officials than with the officials themselves. Such household acquaintance would sufficiently explain admittance to the High Priest's courtyard and interest in the Jewish councillors. In any case the references and allusions in the Gospels do not indicate that John was what we should call especially cultivated or refined. There is lack of nicety in his joining with James in the request for high places in the coming kingdom;[1] moreover, the request makes clear that he had not yet grasped the nature of that kingdom. If one had to classify this disciple one would say that he belonged to the middle class of society, — the class which has not the poetry and art of the rich, or the dreams and folk-lore of the poor, but goes daft over such so-called practical matters as political economy and arithmetic. In other words, St. John came from that class of people who are least likely to spiritualise the hard facts with which they come in contact. Dr. Johnson was a fair type of the class, when he confuted Berkeley and idealism by kicking a stone.

Yet our Lord included this disciple among the three most favoured for His sacred and intimate moments. And, identifying him with the beloved disciple, we must recall that it was he who reclined next to the Master at the Last Supper. More than all this we must not forget that at the start the Saviour gave to James and John the surname Boanerges — Sons of Thunder.[2] Attempts to explain this as a term of reproach fail, because Christ did not so use sur-

[1] St. Mark x. 37. [2] St. Mark iii. 17.

names. It was a pledge and a promise. John could have been little more than a boy: we may believe that, to the people who heard, this surname sounded inappropriate, unnatural. Out of this ruddy youth was to come inspiration, power, a sound going out to the ends of the world. It was a prophecy of what he was to be.

The Gospel of St. John is more than history, not less. It is poetry, interpretation, life. To the unimaginative critic, to the critic who has not measured the transforming power of Christ, it is incomprehensible that the John of the Synoptic Gospels could even after a lapse of sixty or seventy years have written the Fourth Gospel. Such a critic is apt to dwell on details of the narrative or of the discourses, worried because they do not always bear marks of exact literalism. A profounder story than acts and words of the Lord is told. The inner life of Christ is told. It is a revelation of the Divine and Human Character, — and it is done by the person who as a young man was eager for high seats in a literal throne-room. This transformation is surely a profound and astonishing miracle. No one but Christ would or could have seen the latent power in the young disciple; no other could have developed it and brought it to its perfection.

III. *The Transformation of Hardened Sinners*

But a moral change is harder to make, people sometimes think, than any other. Executive or intellectual development does not perhaps seem unreasonable; but when a man has reached, let us say, the age of

thirty and has been grossly bad, has acquired fixed habits of evil life, then to transform that man into a saint is indeed a miracle. Publicans and harlots were in Christ's day, as now, types of the worst. Humanity then, as now, abandoned such as hopeless. Not so Christ. He was reproached for His kindness toward these abandoned persons. We know that He changed such people completely. And He changed them by the same method used for the transformation of Simon: He believed in their potential righteousness; and He gave them His own strength. There must have been many a Zacchæus, many and many a Magdalen. History since has shown the same miracle in the same Name. Augustine, licentious, ribald, turned, through Christ, into one of the lights of the world — and the change was made when human experience says that habits are fixed. So John Newton, centuries later. So countless souls in all Christian years have met Christ in the way, and have turned from blackness to the whiteness of light and purity. It is still the record of Christ's transforming power. It is still His supreme miracle, — the miracle surviving to our own time, and accomplished in the presence of a Christ who is no less real because invisible.[1]

[1] The Conversion of St. Paul is perhaps the greatest transformation effected by Christ, since it shows the strength of His personality working upon that most stubborn of qualities — a matured and fixed intellectual position. I do not wish to ignore it, but simply to draw attention to the fact that it was a conversion from wrong to right, and so may be classed with moral transformations. For one who believes Christ truly present in the world to-day, there can be no effort to explain that St. Paul's transformation was subjective. The Invisible Christ is as objective as possible.

CHAPTER XII

His Deliberate Purpose

IN some critical estimates of our Lord's Life there has been a tendency to regard His purpose as gradually changing. His sinless character is recognised from the start. Then, as He developed and manifested His power — which is recognised as unique — He is thought to have adopted the current Messianic ideal, as the ideal which most nearly corresponded to His own intuitions. The critical scholars of whom I speak, feel that He was at first inclined to accept the material aspects of this Messiahship, only gradually rejecting the material Messiahship for the spiritual. By an ingenious quoting of texts they aim to show that even to the end Christ felt the charm of an earthly Messianic kingdom; as when He said at His trial, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." [1] It is one of the peculiarities of a certain kind of critical scholarship that it can serenely ignore or explain away large sections of material — quite as historically sound as the material used — when that material is inconvenient for a given theory. Such is the case here. The words and events showing that Christ's purpose was definite and unchanged from the

[1] St. Matt. xxvi. 64.

beginning of His ministry — not to speak of an earlier time — melt into the very structure of the records. It is quite clear that only gradually could Jesus wean the Twelve and the other disciples from the more or less carnal views of a Messiahship which was the inheritance of the most hopeful section of Judaism. Their view of a new heaven and a new earth was "the point of contact" at which He could begin to teach His unique lesson to the world. It is most uncritical and indiscriminate to confuse His guidance of His friends' ideas with the ultimate ideas which evidently were persistently within His own purpose from the start. A brilliant scholar has recently summed up Christ's attitude toward the Messianic idea, in language which seems to contradict much of his own contention, but the implication gives a truer point of view than his thesis: "Thus the Messianic idea," he says, "was the only possible form in which Jesus could clothe His inner consciousness, and yet an inadequate form; it was a necessity, but also a heavy burden which He bore in silence almost to the end of His life; it was a conviction which He could never enjoy with a whole heart." [1] The purpose of Christ was deeper, always: He used a language to express that purpose which people could understand. If we change the beginning of this quotation so that it will read, "The Messianic idea was the only possible medium through which Jesus could explain Himself to His age," we shall have a dictum as keen as it is true.

Let us dare, therefore, to ask what was the deliberate purpose of Christ in His mission to the world

[1] W. Bousset (tr. J. P. Trevelyan), "Jesus," p. 180.

I. *He Was Sent from God*

It is safe to begin slowly and to note that at the basis of any purpose which we may discover was Christ's unvarying certainty that He was sent from God. Naturally the definite expressions of this certainty are most numerous in the Fourth Gospel, but the Synoptic Gospels are well equipped with definite assertions, and moreover their atmosphere is pervaded with the spirit of this certitude. The Boy of twelve said that He must be about His Father's business.[1] The climax of the baptism can be interpreted only as a commission from God.[2] The temptation was met by the confidence that He was not to plan for Himself, or to draw upon God's protection, but simply and solely to do what the Father told Him.[3] In His sermon at the Nazareth synagogue, He told His old friends and neighbours that He was divinely sent to preach to the poor, to let the captive loose, to heal the sick; — He was sent from God.[4] In the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen it is altogether clear that He is the Beloved Son *sent* last of all.[5] In the discourse on the True Manna He said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."[6] But there is no need to multiply the evidence. "There is nowhere," says a very fearless scholar, "any hesitation, or doubt, or development from presentiments to certainty. . . . He acts His whole life long under the stress of compulsion. He

[1] St. Luke ii. 49.
[2] St. Mark i. 11.
[3] St. Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10.
[4] St. Luke iv. 16–30.
[5] St. Matt. xxi. 37.
[6] St. John vi. 38.

knows Himself sent, nay, driven by God." [1] So far, therefore, there can be no possible dissent from even the most radical quarter.

II. *Though Sent, He was not a Prophet*

It would then be natural to say that Christ was a prophet. But the main characteristic of a prophet is that he speaks for another. Among the Jewish prophets there were two distinct attitudes: in one attitude they prepared the way of the Lord, — that is, they felt themselves links in a chain which should terminate in the clear rule of the Messiah; in the other attitude they spoke directly for Jehovah, — then they said with uncompromising sharpness, "Thus saith the Lord."

Jesus Christ recognised Himself always as one sent from God; yet He neither looked forward to one higher than Himself, nor did He utter His Truth in any Name outside Himself. The vague anticipations of the Messianic idea reached their climax in Him and were lost, — lost because the highest anticipations were so totally inadequate for the Person He showed Himself to be. Further, when He taught He did not even pause to say, "Thus saith the Father": it was always, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time . . .; but *I* say unto You [2] . . ."; or, "Verily, verily I say unto you . . ." He implied that His own word was absolute. He was not a prophet. He was one whose authority was in Himself.

[1] Wernle (tr. Bienemann), "Beginnings of Christianity," I. p. 45.
[2] St. Matt. v. 22, etc.

III. *He Lived the Father's Character*

Who then was Christ? Just at this point it is unnecessary to go the length of the divine claim; for it will be wiser, for the sake of clearness, to go slowly. He knew Himself sent from God, and His mission was to display to men the Character of God. It was not so much a matter of teaching as of living: He must live out in His own character the character of the Father. St. John's Gospel is filled with this supreme thought. "I and my Father are one";[1] "He that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me";[2] "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him";[3] 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father";[4] "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works";[5] "Know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him."[6]

The Synoptic Gospels are not without this direct testimony. In both St. Matthew[7] and St. Luke[8] His word is recorded: "No man . . . knoweth who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." When the attractive young man was rebuked for calling Christ "good," it was not because he had used an inappropriate title, but because he had used it lightly without weighing, without knowing, its content.[9] When Christ spoke of casting out devils,

[1] x. 30. [3] xiv. 7. [5] xiv. 10. [7] xi. 27.
[2] xii. 45. [4] xiv. 9. [6] x. 38. [8] x. 22.

[9] St. Mark x. 18. The exegesis which would make this a disclaimer of the right to receive this title does violence to the context, and can arise (as it has arisen) only from *a priori* prejudice.

He declared that He did it "with the finger of God."[1] When met with the challenge that God alone can forgive sins, He sealed His word of forgiveness by a word of healing.[2] But more than any definite words is the Life itself as recorded in the Gospels, showing a Man who by His Life revealed the Life of the Father.

IV. *His Purpose was to Show God a Father of Love*

We are now narrowing the purpose of Christ. He was sent from God; He pointed to Himself; in Himself He displayed the Character of the Father. Now what characteristic of God did He make it His deliberate purpose to manifest? There can be but one answer. By His own Life He demonstrated God to be, first of all and above all, a Father — a Father of Love.

In a general way we may see what contributions had been made, up to Christ's time, toward a human understanding of God's character. However vaguely, yet surely, various nations had reached some partial conceptions of the Being who ruled the Universe. To the Greeks, He was the Beautiful, the Happy, — dwelling apart from man's discomfiture. To the Romans He was the harsh embodiment of Law. To the Hebrews He was a noble and righteous Taskmaster, who, though interested in men, was generally vexed with them and set them impossible duties. To a world with such ideas of God, Jesus Christ came. He had one absorbing purpose, — to show men who God really is. Not by words, but by His own Life, He was to make clear God's character once for all.

[1] St. Luke xi. 20. [2] St. Mark ii. 7, 9.

He showed God beautiful and happy, as the Greeks had discovered. He demonstrated that the Romans were right when they said that He was the Embodiment of Law. By His Life, too, He showed that in saying that God is the Noble, the Righteous One, His own nation had won the highest truth given hitherto to the world. But Christ was to declare the best that could be. Every day He was to prove that God's chief prerogative is to love men, to sympathise with them.

We catch the first notes of the purpose when as a Boy of twelve He returned with His mother and Joseph to demonstrate a loyal Son's loving obedience in the Nazareth home; we catch more definite strains in His resisting the use of any of His unique powers for Himself, in the temptation; and thereafter He did nothing but go about doing good, being unspeakably kind. As He pitied and helped the poor, the sick, the bad, so He taught men that God pitied and helped and loved these same desolate souls. We know that the temptation to depart from this one fixed purpose came to Him time and again. In His nature He had locked other attributes of the Father. He once said plainly that He had it in His power to pray to the Father, and thereby to receive more than twelve legions of angels.[1] He laid aside whatever power was His that He might cling to that demonstration of the Father's character whose aspect is supreme. So the Cross came as an inevitable consequence. In a world as hard and self-complacent as the world of Christ's day a complete Love could meet no other reception. And the Cross

[1] St. Matt. xxvi. 53.

was the summit of the demonstration. It was, for some, ridiculous; for others, blasphemous. The whole world cried out that it was impossible for the Great God of the universe to be sorry for the distress of men — men so small, weak, and unholy. So Christ died on the Cross, not by accident, not because He became involved in one chance fray with the authorities after another; but because He freely chose to do it, because He accepted all the consequences which His deliberate purpose demanded.

Incidentally, it is interesting to reflect upon the meaning which Christ Himself must have put upon His saying, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." [1] To the people who first heard these words they implied doubtless a brave undertaking of any chance difficulty which might present itself in the common day. But after the Crucifixion, after the whole Life of Christ could be seen in contemplation, they must have meant what they surely meant to our Lord: they must have meant the persistent, unflagging pursuit of a hard, definitely selected duty from the start to the end of life. As Christ had His duty given Him by His Father, so the disciples of Christ have their duties given them by God, and just in proportion as the duty is well accepted does it lead inevitably to hardness. The man who enters public life finds that he must give up ideas of mastery and gird himself to serve even the most soiled of humanity. Roger Bacon, years ago, aglow with zest for truth, found that to be the father of modern science he must spend his best years in prison, insulted,

[1] St. Matt. x. 38.

persecuted, hated. The mother with dreams of a "career" gives herself up to the quiet of a home that she may live only for her children: and when the children have gone out to the world, strong and brave through her sacrifice, she is too old, too worn for a "career." She has taken up her cross: her tears, her prayers, her love, have made great men and women for the next generation. To have a deliberate purpose and to cling to it through storm, through the beckoning of sunnier fields, is to follow Christ. For He had a deliberate purpose and never swerved from it till the Cross sealed His constancy with the logic of a perfect victory.

CHAPTER XIII

His Loneliness

ONE of the few sermons likely to survive from the Nineteenth Century is Robertson's on "The Loneliness of Christ." [1] Like Newman's sermon on "The Parting of Friends," it doubtless gains much of its power from the deeper personal history of the preacher. Perhaps it was because Robertson, notably a Christ-filled man, had so acutely felt the sting of loneliness in his own spiritual life that he could write of his Master's loneliness with convincing clearness. No attempt to sketch Christ's Personality can now go far without coming to this majestic and tragic trait. The vigorous Bruce happily calls it "Jesus' Longing for Apt Disciples," [2] and with all his Scotch pathos he shows how Christ was always longing for understanding friends, but never quite finding them. We can come most directly to the pith of the matter if we keep in mind the two truths which these great men have taught: the isolation of Christ, and its unwilling character.

It is scarcely necessary to pause over the thought that our Saviour was rarely alone *physically*. From

[1] F. W. Robertson's Sermons, vol. i. Sermon XV.
[2] A. B. Bruce's "With Open Face," Chapter VI.

the beginning of His fame to the Crucifixion, He was constantly pressed upon by great crowds. It was with evident difficulty that He could secure moments of solitude. But sometimes it happens that one is never more alone than in a dense crowd. On a city street, for example, men and women go thronging past, each intent upon some special business, ignorant or careless that anyone who is near can need sympathy or help. A mother goes by holding a child by the hand, and the stranger recalls that no longer is such love as that for him. Strong men go by laughing and talking in the joy of an evident friendship, and the stranger recalls that in all that crowded city is no friend for him.

Loneliness is something quite independent of solitude. Often in the solitude we feel ourselves in most cheerful companionship. The weary traveller making his solitary journey sees the distant light shining from the home to which he is going, and though he is out in the darkness, a solitary stranger under the black sky, he sings to himself as he thinks of the faces which are gathered about the distant light, — he feels already their affection. Solitary he is; but never less alone. The Christ, who was lonely in the crowds, withdrew to the solitude — and there in the stillness He was comforted by communion with the Father.

Yet Christ craved human friendship. The Master who wished in all things to be identified with humanity[1] longed to have that humanity identify itself with Him. There is a loneliness which cultivates a selfish and chilling individualism, and thereupon casts its cloak

[1] *Supra*, Chapter III.

about it and proudly walks apart from a jarring humanity; but one instantly rejects even a suggestion of such unfriendliness in Christ. Higher and higher we see the spirit of Christ climbing, as the Gospel narrative progresses, and always more and more unattended. Yet we know that He yearned to have those who understood and appreciated close by His side. To a limited extent we can mark the progress of His loneliness.

I. *The Loneliness in His Home*

There is a tendency in modern accounts of Christ to say that He released Himself from the obligations of the family, even treating the family as an enemy.[1] Against this sweeping generalisation must be placed the long silent years at Nazareth. These years must have, in any case, one meaning — loyalty to home. Any man equipped to do such work as His could have had no other reason (which is at all evident) for remaining in a narrow provincial town — lost, as we say, to the world. We must find some other explanation for the three or four sentences which have been lately interpreted as disloyal to family relationships.

In a general way we know that there was a tendency in Jewish life to magnify the prior claims of domestic relationships. We sometimes hear men say to-day, "I am a good husband, a good father; do not ask me to be a Churchman or a patriot." In other words, duty to God and duty to fatherland are rejected as unessential because duty to family completely fills a man's

[1] *Cf.* Bousset's "Jesus," p. 152; Wernle's "Beginnings of Christianity," vol. i. p. 77; *et al.*

horizon. Every public servant, attempting to enlist his fellows in large works, meets the disheartening complacency of these "good husbands and good fathers." Scholars tell us that this tendency was markedly present in the Jewish life of Christ's day. Remembering this we have ample explanation for such *sententiæ* as these: "Follow me; and leave the dead to bury their dead";[1] "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me";[2] "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."[3] They are battle-cries to complete obligations, wherein no man rests content with partial duties, however nobly fulfilled.

Beyond this, it is not only possible, but necessary, to read in other words of Christ a grievous disappointment in His own home. It was certainly a bitter experience when His old friends and neighbours "rose up and cast Him forth," when He preached in the synagogue at Nazareth:[4] it is not unnatural to think that relatives more or less near were in that critical congregation. We know definitely that His brothers did not believe on Him;[5] and it is evident that they were not passive unbelievers, but went to the length of meddling in His God-given task: then it was that He said that His true relatives were they who sympathized with the message which He was bringing from the Father.[6] With the brothers, at this time of interference, was His mother. I cannot see ground for thinking that she was ever unsympathetic with Him; but there is distinct ground for believing that she did

[1] St. Matt. viii. 22.
[2] *Ibid.* x. 37.
[3] *Ibid.* x. 36.
[4] St. Luke iv. 29.
[5] St. John vii. 5.
[6] St. Mark iii. 33.

not understand: indeed the narrative of the sympathetic Luke says so.[1] Her sympathy certainly deepened His love for her: but her failure to comprehend His purpose must have been to Him an agony of loneliness: she, the nearest, dearest, most anxious to understand, could not be near His real spirit. There is not harshness, but a groan of unutterable pathos in His words to her at Cana: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"[2] It was the first act that was to bring Him into such prominence that the Cross was inevitable: and she, doubtless, was thinking only of her pride in this uniquely strong Son, who, though beyond her, was still hers. Very early, we may be sure, Jesus Christ felt the loneliness of His home, in spite of the love of His beautiful mother. No one there, not even she, could be glad when He did His hardest, most glorious acts.

II. *The Loneliness Among His Friends*

Not understood in His home, Christ then turned to His friends. He had twelve friends who were official; they seem also to have been nearest to Him in a personal way. The basis for His choice was their childlike spirit, their willingness to be taught and to be led. It is part of the severity of His experience that the only persons who were at all willing to yield themselves to His power were untrained, undisciplined men. Such men as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathæa, Gamaliel, were perhaps too old to be expected to turn from their fixed convictions. But we have record that a certain

[1] St. Luke ii. 50. [2] St. John ii. 4.

rich young ruler came running to Him one day, showing, by his acts and words, cultivation, charming gentleness, and quick intelligence. "Jesus looking upon him, loved him," and asked him to leave everything, and be His follower, His friend.[1] Evidently this was a man of the Gamaliel or Nicodemus type — and young enough to be moulded by Christ's influence. Christ's comments on this young man's rejection of His invitation show how deeply disappointed He was that He could not have his friendship.[2] I would not imply for a moment that Jesus Christ was not wholly democratic, and valued men exactly for their characters and not for any superficial pleasantness and agreeableness. But we must not confuse the Twelve as Jesus found them with what they were at the end of His training of them. We know what the sensitiveness of Christ was: He felt defects of character as we can never feel them. The Twelve were simple, honest, true-hearted. But they had never been taught to think; they had for a long time no spiritual perception. Many of Christ's most luminous words they could not understand till months, perhaps years, had gone by.[3] We may rightly imagine how lonely Christ must have been, when day by day, longing for human friendship, He could never say the deep things of His Life without having it seem to the Twelve a "proverb," "a hard saying."

Many a man who has reflected upon Christ's Life must have wished for Him that He might, while spending His earthly career, have had Saul of Tarsus for a disciple and friend. What a joy it would have

[1] St. Mark x. 21. [2] St. Mark x. 23 ff. [3] *E.g.*, St. Mark ix. 32.

been to Him to have had a friend who could have understood as Saul of Tarsus did understand later, when "born out of due time."[1] Saul had gone the lengths of other masters. He was ready, by knowing the failures of human systems of reasoning, to absorb and, in some part at least, to understand the inner meaning of Christ's teaching. The rich young ruler had perhaps Saul's intelligence: but he did not have the childlike affection — the complete heart-surrender to a leadership, intellectually already approved. We infer that Palestine did not have a man of trained mind who was willing to be taught by Christ; else Christ would have chosen him. The prime necessity was the docility and straight simplicity of such men as He did choose to be His disciples. No training, no intelligence, could take the place of that. Let this be said as strongly as possible: yet we know that the Christ who, by the conditions of His time, was limited to friendship which could not, to any appreciable degree, understand, was certainly thereby made to feel the rigid loneliness of His Personality.[2]

It was only a little way that the sympathy and understanding of Christ's best friends could penetrate His unlimited nature. Unguessed ranges of hopes and designs for them and for the world lay altogether beyond them. He was thinking always of the ulti-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 8.

[2] *Cf.* A. B. Bruce, "With Open Face," p. 108: "The ideal disciple is one who has been prepared for receiving the instruction of a new master by disappointing trial of other masters. . . . He comes thoroughly qualified to appreciate the lessons he is to be taught by knowledge of other doctrines with which he can compare them. . . . It was for such disciples as he that Jesus craved."

mate rule of unselfishness in the world, — and suddenly He heard His closest friends wrangling about the worldly rank they might have in a very worldly kingdom. How, in spite of His love, He must have felt the chasm yawning between Him and them! Or, again, when in faintest lines He sketched the heroic end, as magnificent as it was difficult, there was no word of hushed reverence and admiration — only easy-going, commonplace protest, and that from Peter, who seemed to understand most. We must think of Christ as entering into the willing sacrifice — planning it and accomplishing it — without the cheering sympathy of His friends. When they gave Him sympathy, admiration, reverence, they did so for reasons less than the highest. From beginning to end He was forced to walk alone in all the higher ranges of His Life. We know from the records that He craved human sympathy in every plan — in every detail. Because Palestine in His day could furnish no friend at once deep and teachable, it was impossible that He should have such human sympathy as His love demanded. Therefore we dare to say that His august Life was the loneliest of all lives which have been lived on the earth.

III. *The Loneliness of the Crisis*

When all this is said, it is only plain history to record that in spite of their slowness and density these twelve friends were our Lord's high comfort. "I have called you friends," He said; "for all things that I have heard from my Father, I have made known unto you."[1]

[1] St. John xv. 15.

How He relied on their human sympathy and help is manifest in His eagerness to have them near Him during the crisis. It was not merely that He was teaching them; He wished them to "watch with Him":[1] He wished the feeling of their human nearness. Here was something which did not require from them intelligence so much as mere clinging love. But the six or seven days before the end showed a succession of glaring acts of selfishness on their part. When His heart was heavy at Bethany[2] with the certainty of the Passion, and when a woman's intuition showed Him, at great sacrifice, a regal homage of adoration and sympathy, His friends were coldly critical of the waste.[3] In the Garden of Gethsemane the dearest three fell asleep when His agony was at its height.[4] Passing over betrayal and denial, we need only remember that every one of these chosen friends forsook Him and fled at the first note of actual danger.[5] It is unnecessary to remind ourselves that at best they understood Him only a little: the joy of their companionship, because of that little, must have been beyond estimate. Here then is the mountain-peak of His loneliness: when He reached the topmost point of life, He had not even the physical presence of these protesting but dimly seeing friends. He was altogether alone. It was natural that human minds should be far from Him, but now the human hearts were withdrawn.

[1] St. Matt. xxvi. 38.

[2] Perhaps the sisters at Bethany, with woman's instinct and unselfishness, came nearer to understanding Him at this time than any of the Twelve.

[3] St. Mark xiv. 4; St. John xii. 5.

[4] St. Mark xiv. 37, 40.

[5] St. Mark xiv. 50.

It is well to note here that it is always a lonely task to do a new achievement in the world. The explorer making his solitary journey through a hitherto undiscovered country tells of his nervous fright at every new sound in the darkness.[1] The poet, the genius, is apt to be a lonely man, because he too is going through a new country. But the earthly career of Christ was new in a way in which no other life can be new. With a new element introduced into humanity He was marking out an altogether new path. In such moments of conscious newness and aloneness, we may surmise that it would have been unspeakable comfort to put out the hand and to feel some human friend — *anything* friendly and familiar, which could have broken the terrible unfamiliarity of the tragic journey toward Victory through a Cross. In the blinding awfulness of that experience the Saviour of men reached out His hand — and every friend had vanished. We cannot imagine it — we can only close our eyes and pray to be delivered from any loneliness like that.

[1] *Cf.* R. Kipling's "Explorer" in "The Five Nations," pp. 52 ff.:

. . . . . .

"I remember lighting fires; I remember sitting by them;
I remember seeing faces, hearing voices through the smoke;
I remember they were fancy — for I threw a stone to try them.
'Something lost behind the Ranges,' was the only word they spoke.
I remember going crazy. I remember that I knew it
When I heard myself hallooing to the funny folk I saw.
Very full of dreams that desert. . . .
God took care to hide that country till He judged His people ready.
Then He chose me for His Whisper, and I've found it, and it's yours!"

IV. *"And yet . . . not Alone"*

The loneliness of Christ was intensified by His foreseeing the desertion of His friends. "Ye shall be scattered," He said to them, "every man to his own, and shall leave me alone." [1] Then He announced the compensation of His aloneness: "And yet," He added, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." [2] When human friendship failed, He fell back upon that which was highest and best — the friendship of the Father. One wonders if for even Christ there was the danger lurking in human friendship, that if human friends had been more satisfying He had been less inclined to withdraw to the heights where He could commune with His Father. It is a startling question, and had best be met.

We are quite familiar with the compensations of loneliness in the ordinary levels of human experience. St. Augustine expressed it finely when he cried, "O sweet, bitter world, hadst thou been less sweet, how had I borne thee; hadst thou been less bitter, I had loved thee too well!" Or, still more finely, when, with deepest emotion, he said, "Lord, the human heart can find no peace, till it rests in Thee." [3] The most apt expression of the compensation in modern literature is probably in Browning's "Saul." There we see David groping after human help for his master's comfort till each human consolation, good to an extent, proves insufficient. Then David, by the very ex-

[1] St. John xvi. 32. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] "Inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te."

tremity of the occasion and by the depth of his love, leaps the chasm between things human and things divine and points Saul to the perfect and complete Friend, God Incarnate. If a man has sufficiently profound demands for sympathy and does not have friends who are too great, he will turn to God with demands for help hitherto deemed impossible, and he will *find* God. We may assume that this is what Jesus meant when He told His disciples that it was expedient that He go away:[1] they ran the risk of limiting the divine to His physical presence, and, so, of losing the perpetual consciousness of God, even when most alone.

We come back, then, to ask whether God, who gives ordinary men such hard and effective beckoning to Himself, gave the same trial, with its attending compensation, to His Son. It is well to record that if our Saviour's trials were greater than ours, the compensations were also correspondingly greater. The question is beyond us; but we may reverently say that it *seems* as if the Father had allowed His Messiah to be in the world without even such a friend as Saul of Tarsus would have been, that at every step, the Christ, unsatisfied with human friendships, might turn to Him, His Father and His God. Perhaps — may we not say it? — this supreme Man could not otherwise have won the strength to bring His lonely Life to victory. And certainly no follower of Christ who is lonely for legitimate reasons can fail to feel the dignity of the association into which his loneliness has brought him.

[1] St. John xvi. 7.

CHAPTER XIV

His Failure

WHEN people speak of the failure of Christ, they commonly mean that paradoxical sort of failure which is the heart of magnificent success. To the eye of the world Christ's most brilliant success was the day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, — we know now that it was only the excited cheer of a fickle populace. To the eye of the world Christ's irreparable defeat was Good Friday, — we now celebrate Good Friday as the anniversary of the world's supreme victory. Christ declared it all when the pitying women of Jerusalem followed Him with their wails and their tears: "Weep not for me," He said, "but weep for yourselves and for your children." [1] He knew, — as we know after all the years, — that this saddest of spectacles was cause for vibrant shouting, — as men shout when a soldier, against ghastly odds, turns defeat to decisive victory. Tears were not for Him on that bravest of days.

One can find no fault with writers and preachers who dwell on this paradoxical failure in Christ's Life. Nothing so moves discouraged souls to bear up against a sea of troubles; and nothing so puts determination

[1] St. Luke xxiii. 28.

into wavering wills. But, after all, this sort of failure is not failure: it is only a bit of glittering talk so to name it.

Christ did have in His life failure in an exact sense. That is, He attempted to do certain deeds, and they remained unaccomplished. This does not mean that the failure was His fault: there is no trace of weakness or yielding even in His defeats. Because our wills run short, or we commit culpable blunders, most of our failures ensue; but we are candidly conscious that, sin-stained though we are, we sometimes fail through no fault of our own. A stubborn nature or a stubborn humanity may baffle our most sustained and unselfish efforts. Failure very often does not mean dishonour. It may mean only extremely ill fortune.

It will be enough to show our Lord's courage in failure if I select two instances of it: His failure to save His Nation, and His failure to transform Judas into a hero.

I. *His Failure to Save His Nation*

When we speak of saving a nation, we mean more than saving the individuals in that nation. Christ did save many individuals in the Jewish Nation, and they became the nucleus of the Christian Church. But a few years after Christ's vanishing from the earth, the Jewish Nation as a national entity ceased. The Jewish race is spread over the world, and, in an astonishing vigour, retains its identity; but there has never been a Jewish Nation since the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70.

It is legitimate to point out that Christ's redemptive

work has affected every human soul, whether that soul be conscious of the benefit or not. It is right to say that the fine qualities of the Jewish Nation were not lost, but passed out, through Christian universalism, into the eternal life of humanity. Notwithstanding both these axioms, it is exactly true to say that the Jewish Nation — as a Nation — was not saved.

It is important to make sure that Christ really wished to save the Jewish Nation. This makes us ask whether He were really a patriot. We know that He loved humanity, we know that He loved the individual soul. Did He love His fatherland? The first answer may rightly be an appeal to history: what, we may ask, has been the attitude of Christ's most Christlike followers in all ages toward Nationality? It is safe to say that the world ascribes most Christlikeness to those leaders in Christian history who have been patriots as well as Churchmen. The superiority of the Greek Church over the Latin can be ascribed in large degree to its national spirit.[1] The greatness of Savonarola lodged in his fiery love of Florence, and his ability to rouse the civic conscience. The awakening of Christianity in the sixteenth century, its demand for a primitive truthfulness and clearness, its demand that Christ be first, — all this is bound up with the upspringing of the National Spirit in Europe. The conspicuous Christians in those days were the men who fought and prayed for a "country."

The greatness of modern England may easily be ascribed to the union of Church and State; not in any formal way, but in the hearts of her most influential

[1] Dr. A. V. G. Allen's "Christian Institutions," p. 181.

sons. It was no accident that the most conspicuous ecclesiastic of the nineteenth century — Dean Stanley — was installed in a Church that is the supremely national building of England: because he aimed to serve Church and State together, the English people loved him. And it was no accident that, during the same nineteenth century, Gladstone, the most conspicuous English statesman, was known first of all as a Christian man. In our own time and land we are even now rejoicing that our President, the Governor of Missouri, the Mayor of Philadelphia — to name no others — are effective lovers of country because they are first of all acknowledged followers of Christ Jesus, and we feel that their intense patriotism is a shining token that their Christianity is real. It would be easy to make a long list; but it is certainly fair to say that we instinctively ascribe to a Christlike man a strain of patriotism. What Christ, all along the years, has inspired men to be, He must have been Himself in Palestine.

But we need not rest here. There is ample evidence in His own words. The parable of the Wicked Husbandmen [1] is a national parable. When the parable reads, "But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son," [2] there can be but one interpretation: God sent Jesus Christ to save the Jewish Nation. The parable records [3] that the mission failed: "Therefore say I unto you," concluded Jesus, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the

[1] St. Matt. xxi. 33–43; St. Mark xii. 1–11; St. Luke xx. 9–18.
[2] St. Matt. xxi. 37. [3] *Ibid.*, 39.

fruits thereof." [1] Not only does Christ somewhat vaguely announce this part of His mission in a parable, but He distinctly tells it in His lament over Jerusalem. We need to remember that Jerusalem was Jewry even more than Paris now is France, or London is England. A lament over Jerusalem is therefore a lament for His nation. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," He cried, . . . "how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." [2] No possible reading of those words can take out of them the fire of patriotism. The man who said them loved His country, and tried to save her from ruin.

And He failed. The parable and the lament are by scholars placed among the words spoken on the last Tuesday before the Crucifixion, — the last day of His public ministry. He had other and greater tasks — for humanity, for individuals — but among them was this task to save His dear country. You may say that it must have been clear to Him for months that the foolish people would not see or understand: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." [3] Let that be as it may; He did not give up saving His nation till He stood with His back to the wall, meeting the last deadly thrusts. He did not save His country, but we can truly say that He gave of His last efforts for her.

Again, let it be said, the fault was in no sense His. God forces salvation on neither man nor nation.

[1] St. Matt. xxi. 43. [2] *Ibid.*, xxiii. 37, 38.
[3] St. John i. 11.

Jesus Christ gave all, — the Jewish Nation had but to receive it. She rejected it, — and died.

II. *His Failure to Transform Judas into a Hero*

One of the most perplexing problems of Christ's Life must always be His choice of Judas, and His failure to transform him. The problem is made somewhat more difficult because, in the Fourth Gospel especially, Judas is always mentioned with bitterness; and this bitterness of the Evangelist is often transferred, in the reader's imagination, from the ardent author to Christ Himself. But as one studies the relation of Jesus to Judas, it becomes increasingly evident that our Lord regarded him with tenderness to the end. However we regard the degree of foreknowledge which the Incarnation involved, Christ must have seen more and more clearly that Judas was not growing away from the defects of his character, but was running deeper and deeper risk of failing. It has recently been pointed out that if Christ were not trying to save Judas up to the very last, His permitting Judas to break the paschal bread with the Twelve either was a sign of His dim discernment of Judas's plot, or was a dramatic invitation to His own death.[1] Obviously, on any grounds — even of the most general survey of Christ's characteristics — both of these possibilities must be rejected: one who read human hearts as Jesus of Nazareth read them certainly knew the intentions of Judas; and no one has ever yet been

[1] Professor F. G. Peabody, "Jesus Christ and Christian Character," pp. 88–89.

rash enough to accuse our Lord of any attempt at dramatic posing. Nothing is left us, then, but to be convinced that our Lord did not give Judas up, till, seeing his nervous glances, his lack of interest in the sacred Last Supper, He gave the sign that the betrayal was inevitable.[1] Even in the Garden, after the betrayal, it is with the despair of unrequited love — but love still — that Jesus utters His amazement at the form of the betrayal: "Judas — my friend[2] — betrayest thou the Son of Man *with a kiss!*"[3] Does that not imply that though Christ had at the last moment abandoned Judas to betray Him in some way, He had vainly hoped that it would be in some franker, more courageous way? Still the dear Master was reaching out to save His friend.

Nor was this the end. The tone with which Jesus spoke His amazement must have had the same healing in it as was in the look which He gave to Peter after the denial. Though the sin of Judas had been as scarlet, there was a tone ringing in his ears which told him that there was for him a love which could make this sin white as snow. In ways we cannot picture, we may believe that the effort to save Judas from his lower self followed him till the agony of desperation brought him to his miserable end.

However we look upon Christ's persistence in the face of ultimate failure, a long vista of possibilities opens before us. We ask whether the Nation, the individual, thus apparently lost in one dispensation,

[1] St. Mark xiv. 20. [2] St. Matt. xxvi. 50.
[3] St. Luke xxii. 48.

will be pursued by a love so lasting that in some future age, near or far, salvation will come to it. Or, looking off in another direction, we wonder how we who see, at best, with indistinctness, ever dare to abandon a cause or an individual, when the supreme Master of men worked to the end to save a Jerusalem and a Judas. And there steals over the discouraged fighter for truth and right a sense of high company in the blackness of some disastrous failure; one has honestly, with brain and with heart, done one's very best, and the blindness, the stubbornness, of a surrounding world has sealed the entire effort with failure — well, so it was with Christ sometimes! We no longer dare to limit our undertakings to the tasks which we think we may reasonably accomplish; as Christ's men we must do many things which seem impossible, — if God tells us to put our hand to them. We may fail, even doing our bravest; but God will care for our failures, — and as the poet says, "He loves the responsibility."

CHAPTER XV

His Satisfaction

If the supereminent purpose of Christ brought to Him difficulties and sorrows which men never before had known; so this same purpose brought to Him an unprecedented satisfaction. This purpose I have defined [1] as the will to demonstrate to the world the character of the Father as a God supremely of Love. As we know that any man's satisfaction lies in the accomplishing of his purpose (it may be art, profession, trade), so we know that Christ's satisfaction must have been in the force and thoroughness with which He could live out, among men, the Divine Love. The material from which He forged that Love; the way He took to express it; the ultimate outcome of its manifestation, — these, it seems to me, are the chief elements in the satisfaction of Christ.

I. *He Gave Himself No Advantage which Other Men did not have*

I have already spoken of the self-identification of Christ with humanity,[2] in accepting the burden of its sin, sharing the sorrow, and suffering voluntary pain.

[1] Chapter XII. [2] Chapter III.

In so far, He shrank from none of those aspects of humanity which impress us as peculiarly human. There is one further concession to the limitations of humanity which a complete love seems to demand. I fancy that the man who tries to bring the comfort of Christ's Life home to the sufferer is met more often with doubts about Christ's humanity than with doubts about His divinity. And the particular place where people feel the unreality of His humanity is shown in some such objection as this: "Yes," they say, "I know His amazing fortitude in trials such as mine, — but then He had absolute foreknowledge and He saw the certain outcome as we do not see it. The definite knowledge of the outcome makes all the difference in the world; therefore, to think of Him now is not inspiration, is not comfort." I cannot see how the case can be put more clearly. It seems to the weary sufferer as if Christ had an unfair advantage, even while He stands as our exemplar.

On the other hand, to say that Christ had not foreknowledge, to say that He was in any way limited to the ordinary knowledge of His time and nation, is often interpreted as an affront to His divine character.[1] Two things must be said at once. First, if in

[1] *Cf.* A. B. Bruce's "Humiliation of Christ," and Bishop Gore's "Dissertations" (II. "The Consciousness of Our Lord"). Both of these books are valuable for their convenient grouping of passages on this subject from theologians all through history. But to those who put a high estimate on "the fathers," Bishop Gore's book is, from his sympathies, especially important. Clinging as he does to the certainty that Christ's knowledge, power, and majesty were limited in the Incarnation, he points out that the great fathers (*e.g.*, Irenæus, Origen, Athanasius) keep close to the necessary deductions

any way the setting forward of the exposition of the Divine Love required an abnegation of the perfection of the divine knowledge, then its setting aside makes the Incarnation not less complete but more complete, not less wonderful, but more wonderful. St. Paul, in the strength of his power, "determined not to know anything . . . save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." [1] The concentration of purpose which could affect even avenues of information and knowledge is one of the signs of St. Paul's enormous mental power. If the purpose is sufficiently important there is a denial of information and knowledge which is more powerful than its acceptance. So if Jesus Christ, to show men the thoroughness of God's Love, laid aside what might have been His, His love is the more mighty and His divine authority is the more evident: that first. Then one other consideration must be weighed. Philosophers and theologians talk over-confidently of God's omniscience. If Love requires it, can we not

from Scripture; but, he adds, as time went on, theologians cutting loose from Scripture put more and more confidence in their own speculations, till in the Middle Ages "theology" is quoted before the facts of the New Testament (*Op. Cit.*, p. 171). That his view does not contradict Church authority, Dr. Gore shows by an appeal to the decrees of the Councils, which, he says, give "an increased belief in the divine Providence which superintended their decisions." "For," he goes on (p. 212), "while the theological tendencies of the time were seriously one-sided and set to emphasize the divine at the expense of the human, the conciliar decisions are deliberately and perfectly balanced. . . . The churchman who makes a right use of the Church's decisions . . . will not be in any peril of finding this his central faith contradicted in the New Testament." (See also pp. 213 f.)

[1] 1 Corinthians ii. 2.

think that the Almighty Father Himself wills not to know certain details of the life of the humanity upon which He has bestowed what we are forced to call freedom of the will? Logical necessity may compel one to reduce the region of God's ignorance — if we may use so bold a term — to a very tiny corner in each human life. But how much is made clear if we believe that when one sinner repents part of the joy which that repentance brings to the Heavenly Father comes from its surprise. Does one not read it in the parable of the Prodigal Son? Does one not find it in the necessary idea (which will not down, in philosophical thought) of the freedom of the human will? God could, we say, have made the world as a machine of steel, with every part mechanically fitted to its neighbour: He could have known every act of man to all eternity. But it is to magnify God's Name to believe that He wills not to know all.[1] He wilfully shuts out of His knowledge the issue of many a fierce battle which must rage in the human soul. No combination of circumstances, no nice adjustment of motives, can tell the outcome. A man's free soul, given its independence by the Lord, alone can decide

[1] An idea as old as Origen: see his comment on St. Matthew xxiv. 36. That modern philosophy is not averse to this conception one knows from these careful words by Martineau ("A Study of Religion," vol. ii. p. 263): "Lending us a portion of His causation, He refrains from covering all with His omniscience. Foreknowledge of the contingent is not a perfection; and if, rather than have a reign of universal necessity and stereotyped futurity, He willed, in order to prepare scope for a gift of moral freedom, to set up a range of alternative possibilities, He could but render some knowledge conditional for the sake of making any righteousness attainable."

the day. Theologically, therefore, it ill becomes a reverent thinker to say that the setting aside of any degree of knowledge is inconsistent with a complete revelation of God in Christ.

We are now ready to examine the facts.[1] There is certainly no *a priori* necessity for denying a limitation of Christ's knowledge: such limitation may reveal new traits in His character,[2] but in no way can it detract from His honour and authority.[3] The most famous

[1] Candid orthodox theologians, — such as Church in England and, recently, Forrest in Scotland, — have frankly said that if we explain away the recorded words and events which show a limitation of Christ's knowledge, we must not complain of Unitarians when they explain away passages which give indubitable proof of His consciousness of Divine Sonship. The *facts* of the Gospels must be rigorously accepted.

[2] *Cf.* Bishop Gore ("Dissertations," p. 206): "In proportion as the real human experiences, sufferings, and limitations of Christ during the period of his humiliation are forgotten and ignored, in that proportion men will go to seek human sympathy from on high in some other quasi-deified being. We must recover the strength which the Christian creed is meant to derive from a Christ made in all points like unto His brethren, apart from sin. . . . The minimizing of the meaning of His manhood is (among other things) largely accountable for the development of an exaggerated devotion to His Mother and the Saints."

[3] The shrinking from this fact is fading away among conservative theologians. In Liddon's Bampton Lectures (1866) we find the effort to guard the Divine dignity by isolating the humanity. "His Single Personality," said Liddon, "has two spheres of existence: in the one It is all-blessed, undying, and omniscient; in the other, It meets with pain of mind and body, with actual death, and with a correspondent liability to a limitation of knowledge" (p. 695). Thirty-five years later, Moberly said in his "Atonement and Personality": "The Incarnate never leaves His Incarnation. God, as man, is always, in all things, God *as man*. He no more ceases, at any point,

instance of His own disclaiming of omniscience is, of course, His word about His return in glory: "Of that day," He said, "knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." [1] Moreover, His attitude toward Judas can be explained in no way whatever, unless we believe that Christ did not know the issue. It is akin to blasphemy to think that Jesus Christ could have bidden a man to a post whose acceptance He knew to be destruction. Very important, too, is that most agonising cry from the

to be God under methods and conditions essentially human, than, under these essentially human methods and conditions, He at any point ceases to be God. . . . There are not two existences either of, or within, the Incarnate, side by side with one another. If it is all Divine, it is all human too" (p. 97). So, in 1906, Dr. Du Bose in his "Gospel in the Gospels": "The hesitation and reluctance to see all God, and highest God, not only in the humanity but in the deepest human humiliation of Jesus Christ, is part of the disposition to measure exaltation by outward circumstance and condition instead of by inward quality and character. We find it impossible to recognise or acknowledge God in the highest act of His highest attribute" (p. 284). Also, again: "Is the act in which love becomes perfect a contradiction or a compromise of the divine nature? Is God not God or least God in the moment in which He is most love? Where before Christ, . . . was or is love so love, or God so God!" (pp. 272 f.). To this growth in the understanding of Christ's Nature, Dr. Sanday gives his consent. "I have the impression,' he says ("Expositor," May, 1906, p. 401), in commenting on this very passage from Dr. Du Bose, "that in this respect the moderns have really improved upon the ancients. . . . That is a kind of boldness that I do not think we should have found in any of the ancients. And I cannot help thinking that it is superior to the Kenotic teaching of many of the moderns. . . . The application of it . . . is deeply impressive." See, also, Dr. Sanday's article "Jesus Christ," in Hastings's Bible Dictionary, vol. ii. p. 652.

[1] St. Mark xiii. 32.

Cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" [1] In that moment the knowledge of the future was overcast. We cannot comprehend the full meaning of the Cross if we do not see the risk of that awful doubt.

All through His career He asked questions, and often expressed surprise. A nature so transparent as His could brook nothing for effect. When He asked questions, He sometimes sought to arouse attention; at other times He certainly desired information, — and received it.

Nor was the Apostolic Age obscure upon the question. St. Luke says that during the eighteen years at Nazareth, after the visit to the Temple as a boy of twelve, He "advanced in wisdom." [2] The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is emphatic: "We have not," he says, "a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been *in all points* tempted like as we are, yet without sin.[3] . . . Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." [4]

In connection with this thought that Christ voluntarily [5] refused to give Himself an advantage of knowledge which would have made life easier for Him than

[1] St. Matthew xxvii. 46. *Cf.* H. A. W. Meyer, "Matthew" (tr. Christie), vol. ii. p. 273: "This subjective feeling must not be confounded with actual *objective desertion on the part of God* (in opposition to Olshausen and earlier expositors), which in the case of Jesus would have been a metaphysical and moral impossibility." The whole comment on this verse is valuable.

[2] St. Luke ii. 52.

[3] Hebrews iv. 15. [4] *Ibid.* v. 8.

[5] *Cf.* Ottley, "Incarnation," ii. 291.

for the rest of mankind, we must hold ourselves to the remembrance of how keenly a man who is alert and pure-hearted sees into the future. So, quite apart from any unique nature within Him, we must believe that, by the merely human elements, Christ would have seen farther than, by the same elements, any other man could have seen. This, it should be noted, need not be from any supernatural power, but by reason of the clearness and integrity of the use of these human elements. It is startling to think what human powers, never abused, always studiously cultivated, must be able to accomplish. And in no field, we may imagine, would that accomplishment be greater than in seeing the realities in past, present, and future. Therefore, we need not be surprised if in the Gospel records there seem to be few instances when Christ was not aware of events to come. A humanity such as His would be far-seeing, in its own right. That there are any instances of limited knowledge recorded gives us reason to believe that He worked out His problem with the same sort of knowledge which lies within the reach of all other men.

If we accept such a point of view, certain vexing questions fade from importance. We ask whether possession by devils is our modern insanity; and then we go on to ask whether our Lord used the term "possession by devils" because He accommodated Himself to the language of His day, — as we now speak of the "sunset," — or whether He used it because His human understanding was limited by the medical theories then in vogue. So, too, scholars are sure that the Apostles expected the speedy return of Christ "at the

end of the world." Whereupon scholars divide: some saying that the Apostles misinterpreted words of Christ; others that Christ Himself expected to return during the lifetime of His disciples.[1] The question is in any case unimportant, because time is altogether relative and subjective for any man who is roused to profound realities. To any man who looks at the world from God's point of view, "a thousand years are but as yesterday." Besides, our Lord's own definite announcement that He did not know the day, removes at once all scandal from the discussion.[2]

[1] It is right to note that few (and they iconoclasts) accuse Christ of such an expectation. *Cf.* Dean Church ("Life," Eversley ed., p. 319): "It would perplex me much to think that He was imperfect or ignorant in what He *did* say, whether we understood Him or not."

[2] *Cf.* Liddon's "Bampton Lectures" for 1866, pp. 687 ff. Liddon, against his will, is forced by his scholarship. "If," he says (p. 689), "we should understand that our Lord in His Human Soul was, at the time of His speaking, actually ignorant of the day of the last judgment, we should find ourselves sheltered by fathers of unquestioned orthodoxy. St. Irenæus discovers in our Lord's Human ignorance a moral argument. . . . St. Athanasius insists that the explanation which he gives, restricting our Lord's ignorance to His Human Soul, is a matter in which the faithful are well instructed. He is careful to assert again and again our Lord's omniscience as God the Word; he attributes Christ's 'ignorance' as Man to the condescending love by which He willed to be like man in all things, and compares it to His hunger and thirst. . . . St. Cyril of Alexandria argues that our Lord's 'ignorance' as Man is in keeping with the whole economy of the Incarnation. As God, Christ did know the day of judgment; but it were consistent with the law of self-humiliation prescribed by His infinite love that He should assume all the conditions of real humanity, and therefore, with the rest, a limitation of knowledge. There would be no reasonable ground for offence at

We return, therefore, from such investigation, with a fairly clear decision that Christ held this among the satisfactions of His Life: having undertaken the consequences of sin, sorrow, and pain, with His brethren, He relinquished the extraordinary helps which lay at His hand,[1] — as He would not call the twelve legions of angels, so neither would He draw upon the stores of divine knowledge. What a new glory is thrown upon the manifestation of the Divine Love in Christ, if we think that, in the living out of that Love, Christ gave Himself no advantage which other men did not have. And what a joy it must have been to Christ that He was able to wave aside each beckoning to take an easier course than, in the nature of things, could ever be open to His followers. He forged the symbols of His Father's

that which was only a consequence of the Divine Incarnation." (See Iren. adv. Haer. ii. 28, 6; Athan. contr. Arian. Orat. iii. c. 45; *Ibid.* c. 43; *Ibid.* c. 46; Cyril. Alex. Thesaurus, op. tom. v. p. 221.) "No such limitation," says Liddon (p. 695) "can interfere with the completeness of His redemptive office; but at least it places Him as Man in a perfect sympathy with the actual conditions of the mental life of His brethren."

[1] If it be objected here that He used miraculous powers, we must remember that He never used a miracle in His own behalf. His contemporaries, *ipso facto*, had advantages over others; He Himself refused to accept any miraculous advantage, personally. Even His enemies noted it when they said, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Beyond this, even though He used miracles in displaying the Divine Love, we may look upon the miraculous power as His "gift." Every man has some "gift." Not the "gift," but the use of it, is the significant note in any life.

This idea is clearly set forth by Gregory of Nyssa ("Against Apollinarius," 28).

Love out of the material which humanity had hitherto called common.[1]

II. *He Felt the Cost of His Love*

The pastor of the City Temple in London, tells[2] the story of two sisters: one, weak, suffering, dying; the other, in her strength, living only to take care of the invalid. As Mr. Campbell visited them, the watcher at the bedside said to him: "It seems dreadful to be so helpless, to feel that I can do so little to assuage this suffering. . . . If only I could do something that hurts — hurts *me* — I think I should feel better — to let my love out." It is the same thought which the great modern poet applies to God: —

> "Gladness be with thee, Helper of the World!
> I think this is the authentic sign and seal
> Of Godship, that it ever waxes glad,
> And more glad, until gladness blossoms, bursts
> Into a rage to suffer for mankind,
> And recommence at sorrow."[3]

In the same way, again we see a rational element in the self-imposed flagellations of the mediæval saints: longing to show their love to God, they wished to feel pain; not willing to await it in God's time, they dared

[1] *Cf.* Edward Lincoln Atkinson, "Life," pp. 91, 92. "Where I love Christ most is on the other side of Calvary; when it was all hazard and He was *man* and *God* because He did so much, *dared* so much; gave up His life without counting on any other victory than the one which would be His when it would be all mankind's."

[2] R. J. Campbell, "City Temple Sermons," p. 260.

[3] Browning's "Balaustion's Adventure": *Works*, vol. xi. p. 88.

to invent it. There can be no doubt that he who has great love counts it a satisfaction if for the sake of the beloved he may be accounted worthy to suffer.[1]

This, then, we may be sure was one of the deep satisfactions of Jesus Christ. We sometimes say that even had man at every step in the history of the race done his duty, there would still have been the Incarnation; only then there could have been no Cross, no Atonement. It was sin that made the Cross inevitable. No one can be thankful for such a hideous evil as sin; but, since it had come, one may be thankful that it offered to Christ the hard and glorious avenue of expressing the Divine Love in its most complete form. Loving men, He could feel, by stinging pain, the depth of His love.

Among the complex situations of the last few days of Christ's career, one must not lose sight of a great alternative which lay in Christ's power; and that an alternative which with perfect justice He could have seized. The only hindrance was His Love. We see that in those days two forces were arrayed one against the other: on one side, Christ; on the other, the leaders of the Jewish people. It will be wise, for the time being, to eliminate any religious or theological significance from the contest. Christ was doing a work of immediate mercy and of ultimate beneficence. He deliberately refused to allow Himself to be made a political factor in the state. The Jewish authorities, driven by a blind prejudice and an inveterate fury, determined to be rid of Him at any cost. They stooped to all sorts of illegal meanness. Even Pilate,

[1] *Cf.* Acts v. 41.

willing enough to please them, could find no shred of justice in their contention. Now think of what might have been. On that last Tuesday, when the nets were being drawn more and more closely about His innocence, He could have done some marvellous act — such as He had already performed — and the wavering mob would have returned to Him its allegiance. The streets of Jerusalem would have been full of people screaming their loyalty, trampling down the hostile priests, bidding the Nazarene lead them on. Or, had He in His mere human magnetism stood upon the Temple steps, had He waved His hand over the people, had He given one majestic command — then what a scene of mad tumult would have been created in His favour. We are prone to forget Christ's executive genius because He used it for spiritual organisation. Surely army and state never have known such leadership as one flash of His eye might have kindled. He who could found a spiritual kingdom, which, strengthening through nineteen centuries, promises to dominate every corner of the earth, could readily have excelled Alexander and Cæsar, in their office, — and that without fault. It is right to believe that He would not yield to carnal weapons because the secure victory of the spiritual is by spiritual means. But that is subordinate to a motive evidently higher still: to allow any other course than the brutal, illegal way of the Cross was to save Himself and to let the rulers of the Jews perish. Looking at the whole subject as a political study, we see that either Jesus must die, or the Jewish leaders. Caiaphas spoke sanely, when he announced that *either* Christ or the Jewish people must

perish.[1] Christ had justice on His side. He must die unjustly; *or* He must bring on a crisis in the Jewish state, and then His Jewish enemies must die in their sins.[2] The decision was His. For love of those who had misinterpreted, slandered, hated Him, He gave Himself up. No man took His Life, He said: He laid it down of Himself.[3] Even if these people had not received Him, they were still His people. He suffered in their stead literally.

There is no need to go farther. This certain assurance that He had gone to the depth of pain for love of the world must have been a satisfaction beyond any measuring. We know it faintly from our own human loves, which remain uncontent till they have endured hardness for the sake of the beloved. Jesus Christ has shown us that God is not outdone by His creatures in the thoroughness of His love. He, through Christ, gave to His Love the joy of great pain.[4]

III. *He Had the Glad Sense of Accomplishment*

For any man who has lived at all deeply, neither fame nor wealth can bring much satisfaction. The only satisfaction with which one can be really happy is the assurance that one has accomplished something. However we may interpret Christ's foreknowledge, it is certain that He knew that His disciples had caught

[1] St. John xi. 50.

[2] What this probation accomplished is shown by Acts vi. 7: "A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." So also Acts ii. 37, *etc.*

[3] St. John x. 18.

[4] *Cf.* Dean Wace's brief but stimulating book, "The Sacrifice of Christ: Its Vital Reality and Efficacy."

His message — enough of it, at any rate, to recall and enforce it under the later guidance of the Spirit. "I manifested thy Name," He said to His Father, "unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; . . . and they have kept thy word. Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee. . . . They believed that thou didst send me. . . . I am glorified in them: . . . as thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. . . . The glory which thou hast given me, I have given unto them." [1]

When He spoke to His disciples of His departure, He comforted them with the thought that in His Father's house are many mansions, and that He was going to prepare a place for them.[2] This meant, among other things, that God's gifts, which are limited only by our power to receive them, would now be possible for them — because He had been successful in His work, — He had made them capable of receiving the best in all times and places, as God should bestow it. His final commission to them, just before the Ascension, rings with the joyful confidence of a certain future: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." [3] But even before the Resurrection, while the work was still unfinished, there was, in spite of such dark moments as those in Gethsemane and on the Cross (when He cried out His doubt of God's presence), an abiding consciousness that He who had not ceased to look to the Father at each step, should succeed in His mission to the world. So it is that the

[1] St. John xvii 6–22. [2] St. John xiv. 2, 3.
[3] St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

author of the Epistle to the Hebrews can say that Jesus "for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross." [1] Having used the materials from which other men must make life, having felt the cost of an infinite Love, He had one crowning satisfaction: by communion with His Father, by His own grasp of reality, He knew that He was succeeding. With that assurance, all limitations and all pain were glad aspects of His love, both for man and for God.

[1] xii. 2.

CHAPTER XVI

His Beauty

IN attempting a description of Christ's personality, we must take account of the efforts, in the course of history, to reach some conception of His bodily appearance. In the Gospel narratives there is no conscious attempt at portraiture; and, so far as one can tell, the so-called traditional conception — the long hair, the sad eyes, the parted beard — has no historic value.[1] When men began to paint or draw His picture, the paintings or the drawings were very largely reflections of their theology, now pitiful, now fair, as the artists passed from an emphasis upon the manhood acquainted with grief to an emphasis upon His perfect beauty. When traditions did spring up, especially when it was thought that pictures had been painted, either by miracle or by the hand of St. Luke, and that the traditions were based upon such important "originals," men became largely the slaves of these traditions, and feared to paint the ideal face which would have been for them the face of Christ. So it is that when we come to the great age of painting in the years before and after Raphael, we find reverent

[1] For the growth of these early conceptions see Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. ii. (tr. E. M. Geldart) pp. 189 ff.

attempts to show us Christ, but they all alike lack the spontaneity, joy, and strength which we are sure showed in the face of the Saviour. Modern art has to a degree overcome the bondage to the treacherous tradition; but what it has gained in freedom, it has lost in reverence. Any collection of modern pictures of Christ is hopeless: one is shocked by what seems almost vulgarity. In all this discouraging estimate of the contribution of art to the understanding of our Lord's personality, it is possible to make one or two exceptions. Da Vinci's sketch of the Christ-head for his Last Supper, in its dimness, suggests more than any other old master what we long to find in a picture of Jesus. And several wonderful qualities in reverent combination one finds in Mr. La Farge's picture of Christ and Nicodemus. These two pictures give us a suggestion of what art may at last be able to accomplish toward interpreting the Perfect Man to the world.

So we can form no image of the face of Jesus. Very fortunate for us that we cannot do so, for the greatest portrait, if of a very great man, is always disappointing. It is fairly easy to get a striking picture of a frame-maker, a councillor, a cloth merchant, or a little Spanish princess — provided, of course, a truly great artist is at hand to paint it. But to paint the picture of a genius, a commanding spirit, a creating soul, — that is a different matter! For here there is an interior life which uses the features of a human face as a Paganini uses the strings of a violin, — every instant there is change — joy and pain and triumph and despair and scorn and pity and strength and love — chasing one another in quick succession, or melting

together in one flashing glance. Even when people are not great, but are simply as all the world to you, you take no especial satisfaction in their pictures. You know their faces too well to be satisfied with this fraction of a portrait, which is all that the painter (or the photographer) can catch.

It needs to be said, too, that what we call the features — the outlines of the face, the dimensions, and angles — have singularly little to do with the real face. We all have seen men whose features are plain to ugliness turn faces to us, in their moments of exalted thought and love, which are faces of heavenly beauty. All that is merely physical fades; and the face transfigured, spiritualised, shines before us. It is the real, the abiding face, which can be treasured up in the memory, but which never can be reduced to line or colour.

Faintly, therefore, but in some sense really, we may construct for ourselves some conception of the face of our Master. The Gospel stories give us indications of His face, all unconsciously; for we catch in the attitude of those who surrounded Him the reflection of His glance. Because in certain instances we know how men responded, when He spoke no word to them, we may surmise how He must have looked upon them.

I. *His Health*

We must speak with extreme caution; but it is safe to say that the basic suggestion of the face of our Lord must have been *health*. It is quite true that there have been periods in history when men have thought

of Him as always on the verge of illness; and very often this thought has been incorporated into art. But there is, *a priori*, a reason for believing that He who was whole in spirit was whole also in body. Our age, especially, is attaching blame to a man who does not keep robust, or, growing weak, does not win strength. The same idea, we know, was more or less prevalent in Christ's day, though in a slightly different form: "Who did sin," asked the disciples, "this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" [1] Highly significant it is that in the next generation, also, conspicuous words of Christian teaching read, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." [2] Robust and strenuous periods of Christian life would feel it to be inconsistent with the sinlessness of Christ were He not the embodiment of health.

This *a priori* inference is of small value alone. But it does not stand alone. We must recall the incessant activity of an ordinary day of Christ's ministry — His "interviews," His instructions, His healing, His long journeys — and then, besides these days, we must think of the nights spent often altogether in prayer. "His vigour of health," says a man of ruthless reality, "is proved by the wearing restlessness of His life, and by the daily expenditure of strength both of body and of mind, demanded by the stormy importunity of the mental and physical misery of Israel." [3] How far He was from nervousness we feel when we read of His sleeping calmly through the storm on the lake, when even experienced sailors were frightened.[4] That,

[1] St. John ix. 2. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 19.
[3] Keim, "Jesus of Nazara," vol. ii. p. 194. [4] St. Mark iv. 38.

through the hubbub, He could sleep so soundly shows with what wholesome thoroughness His tired body could refresh itself. No argument for constitutional weakness can be made from the rapidity of His death, after He was nailed to the Cross. Too many possibilities beyond our judging might account for it; such, for example, as fatal injuries inflicted during the scourging.

It is reasonable to think that none but one *whole* of body could have worked all day and watched all night and yet be ready for the most exacting demands of body, mind, heart, and soul, on the morrow. As we think of the face of Christ we cannot avoid the thought that the flush of robust health was there.

II. *His Radiance*

I have already spoken of Christ's gladness.[1] That gladness, we are sure, must have shone in His face. His illustrations, dropped in His teaching, show how the radiance of nature must have been reflected in His smile. He was as no St. Bernard, dull and heavy of face, riding over the shining Alps, and seeing nothing but the neck of his mule. He saw the bright little flowers in the field, and at once He declared that even Solomon in all his pomp was not so beautiful.[2] He watched the birds in their careless flittings, mingling search with song, — and He was glad that God fed them.[3] He talked about children who played in the market place, piping and dancing, and thereupon pretending to be doleful — to catch the sympathetic

[1] Chapter VII. [2] St. Matt. vi. 28, 29. [3] *Ibid.* 26.

attention of the bystanders[1]: we feel at once that He must have stopped, again and again, to smile down upon such childish sport. From His teaching we know that all natural things appealed to Him: vineyards, fields of grain, the land just ploughed; signs of fair weather, and foul; men who lived elemental lives, — vinedressers, fishermen, ploughmen, men seeking employment, beggars — He had watched them all and knew their ways. There is no trace of any accumulation of pedantic facts, there is only the glad absorption of all the simple naturalness and interest of common life.

St. Paul, it has often been pointed out, has no figures from the gentler aspects of nature. Creation groans and travails, but there is no singing of birds, no peeping of flowers above the grass. There is rather the noise of the city in his pages; the clatter of traffic, the tread of soldiers, the shout over athletic victory. We feel at once that there could have been no such radiance in St. Paul's face as in the face of our Saviour. St. Paul felt the evil of the world and he knew that God is Love, but he did not live in country lanes: he could not know the sweetness and hope of a country morning. Jesus Christ had this help which His greatest Apostle did not have; and a radiance which so persistently invaded His happy talk must have written its beauty in His eyes and in His smile.[2]

[1] St. Matt. xi. 16, 17.

[2] For the incidental evidence which this contrast between Christ's figures and St. Paul's gives as for the independent tradition of the words of Jesus (against those who would make St. Paul the inventor of Christianity), see passage from H. Weinel, translated by Professor Peabody in his "Jesus Christ and Christian Character," p. 61, note.

III. *His Gentleness*

We know that He who responded to the inanimate world was equally responsive to the moods of men's souls. We cannot think of anything resembling hardness in the Saviour's face: we feel instinctively that His face must have caught up and reflected in its reverent light all the joy and all the sorrow of the people who passed by. It is not easy to discover the best word for this characteristic. It is kind, winning,[1] charming, magnetic, sensitive; but none of these words seems to be of itself sufficient. Perhaps if we speak of the *gentleness* of His face we shall more nearly approach the intuitive impression which one wishes to impart.

Here again there is no need to rely only on the Christian instinct. The New Testament gives ample witness. When the mothers brought their little children that He should touch them, there is clear evidence that these mothers found in His face that which made them trust to Him what was dearest to them. But it was no mere touch that He gave them. He took the little children in His arms; and so, laying His hands on them, He blessed them.[2] One is sure that as they looked up into His face they fell back into His arms content. He who had only a moment before rebuked His disciples had in His face even then the

[1] Matthew Arnold ("Literature and Dogma," p. 139) reminds us that Bossuet spoke of "le débonnaire Jésus," and that Cowper spoke of His questioning the disciples going to Emmaus "with a kind, engaging air." Matthew Arnold's own famous description ("sweet reasonableness") might here be recalled. [2] St. Mark x. 13–16.

winning tenderness which made timid children trust Him. How can we interpret the passage otherwise?

Then there is the story of Lazarus. When Martha had given one look into the face of her Friend, she cried, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." [1] She could not have said that had she not read in His face the very depths of sympathy: she saw that He felt what she felt. As they stood about the grave, a little later, His face was so full of sorrow that even the Jews said, "Behold how He loved him!" [2] What wonder is it that bad women melted into penitence at the sight of His face: the pity for their case and the horror of their guilt mingled there in an overwhelming tenderness, which drew them to a new life. What wonder is it that women followed Him and ministered unto Him.[3] What wonder that at the last women followed Him weeping on the way to Calvary; and what a very climax of gentleness must have suffused His eyes as He turned to bid them not weep for Him, but for themselves and their children.[4] Men in that age were not gracious to women as a rule; because women were drawn to Christ, we know that they saw in His face a benignity and a consideration which assured them of respect and help. Women and children have always been more sensitive to the face and its story than men have been. May we not think that the Syrophœnician woman kept up her courage to persist in her plea, notwithstanding Christ's words of expostulation, because she fastened her eyes on His face — and she read the gentleness there? [5] At every

[1] St. John xi. 21. [2] St. John xi. 36. [3] St. Luke viii. 3.
[4] St. Luke xxiii. 28. [5] St. Mark vii. 24–40.

turn, as we thread our way through His career, we see the gentleness of the face of Jesus.

IV. *His Commanding Strength*

We cannot think of the Saviour's face without feeling that behind all the radiance and gentleness there was a perpetual seriousness, — the sort of seriousness that proclaims, "I care." We must distinguish this from a usual form of seriousness, which is "anxious for the morrow," and "is troubled about many things" — because such seriousness was distinctly condemned by Christ.[1] It certainly was the seriousness which had thought only for "the one thing needful";[2] therefore implying not trouble, but indomitable strength. Perhaps, then, it will be wiser if we speak of this seriousness as the expression of irresistible command, — a seriousness so intense and vivifying that he who saw it felt impelled to submit without condition.

Several marked examples survive wherein we feel convinced that words were reinforced by the expression of the face, since the words alone do not seem adequate to produce the electric result. To four fishermen, busy at their work, He said, "Follow me"; instantly they left all and followed Him.[3] Passing by the place of toll He said to the busy collector, "Follow me," and the collector arose at once and followed Him.[4] To a centurion, wishing a boon, He seemed so preëminently one to be obeyed, that a word only would be necessary;[5] does this not imply

[1] St. Matt. vi. 34; St. Luke x. 41. [2] St. Luke x. 42.
[3] St. Mark i. 16–20. [4] St. Mark ii. 14. [5] St. Luke vii. 7.

that to a soldier He seemed a born commander, with the presence of a superb general? The Jewish populace, always creatures of outward impressions, could not have greeted Him as prophet [1] and Son of David,[2] had they not felt the commanding authority of His presence. Most convincing of all is the overwhelming effect which His presence had upon the Roman soldiers [3] who came to arrest Him. They had said that they were seeking Jesus of Nazareth. And as the torches flared in His face, He said simply, "I am He." Whereupon "they went backward and fell to the ground": [3] plainly they saw in His face that which downed them — a power which told their harsh strength that they were absolutely at His mercy.

To the men of our Saviour's day His look of command seemed most potent in that constantly He controlled the demons which had seized upon unfortunate souls. However we interpret this possession by demons, Christ's power over it implies that the treatment used in its cure was largely one radiating from His commanding glance. The Gadarene demoniac, "*when he saw Jesus from afar,* ran and worshipped him." [4]

No painter has ever yet caught even a suggestion of the more than martial dignity that must have marked the face of Christ. The Gospel accounts leave us in no doubt about the dominant strength always residing there.

It is right to say that the analogy of all great souls

[1] St. Matt. xxi. 46. [2] St. Matt. xii. 23.

[3] St. John xviii. 6. The σπεῖρα of v. 3 is clearly the Roman cohort. See H. A. W. Meyer's "St. John," vol. ii. pp. 307 and 309.

[4] St. Mark v. 6.

whose faces tell their story would lead us to believe that these expressions of the face of Christ would be most often blended. If artists seem to us, in modern times, to have erred by sacrificing Christ's strength to His tenderness, we must admit that the artist who most nearly succeeds at the impossible task is he who can paint a portrait somewhat as Turner painted landscapes — suggesting many expressions united in one great whole. Browning voices a profound instinct when he says, —

> "'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for . . .
> In the Godhead!"

In the face of Christ we must think of a harmony of opposites. To think of Him with Judas, we must see a face of mingled pity and sternness; to think of Him with Simon Peter, we must see a face of mingled joy and disappointment; to think of Him with Nicodemus, we must see a face of mingled patience and finality. The portrait which even to one's innermost consciousness one dares to paint is of necessity dim. But it is not the dimness of darkness; it is the dimness of the light. Even if we go but a little way in such reverent imagination we are convinced that the face of Jesus Christ was a face of ineffable beauty.

CHAPTER XVII

His Vitality

IN the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel we read, "In Him was life." [1] That part of the serious-minded world which lies just beyond the conscious influence of Christianity is more and more inclined to repeat this ancient sentence. The scientific explorer comes back, now and again, with a verdict which reduces the number of the objects that endure. The sun, he says, is wasting; the mountain brooks will some day be dry; the hills — primitive types of eternity — will fade away; the stars must all at last cease to shine. Then turning to man, the scientist joins the moralist in the lament that even great men spend but a few feverish years and then vanish from the sight and the memory of the world. A very few names from the myriads of humanity are kept in what we call the lists of fame; but the world feels faintly, if at all, their influence. There is one startling exception amid all this wreckage: Jesus Christ is, to the world, more alive to-day than when He walked in Palestine. It is not a theory: the *extent* of His influence, covering continents and centuries; the *intensity* of His influence, inspiring men, in peace and in war, to do consummate

[1] St. John i. 4.

deeds of leadership and sacrifice, — these are facts; and it is a purely scientific spirit which records them. He lived in Judæa; He lives still in all the world. "In Him was Life."

This characteristic of vitality in Christ needs close consideration. We can best study it by observing His conscious appreciation of it, as our records show; then by a rapid survey of His vitality in history. Having assured ourselves of the reality of this vital energy, we may ask one or two profound questions about its origin and transmission, thus arriving at some notion of its quality.

1. *His Own Consciousness of Vitality*

Jesus Christ showed both by His deeds and by His words that He was fully conscious of unique vitality. This vitality was within Himself, but He was able to communicate it to others. When the woman having the issue of blood touched Him in faith, He at once "perceived in Himself that the power (proceeding) from Him had gone forth," and he said, "Who touched my garments?" [1] So, in all the miracles where Christ by touch or other material means effected the cure, we must believe that the physical contact was the avenue of His vitality, and was not a mere aid to faith, for the sake of the recipient. We cannot too persistently insist upon the reality, necessity, and economy of Christ's acts: He did nothing for effect. To the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda, He said, "Wilt thou be made whole?" [2] This seems a super-

[1] St. Mark v. 21. [2] St. John v. 6.

fluous question till you imagine that Christ used the question to force the invalid to look into His eyes; then, as their eyes met, the man's faith drew from Christ the vitality for his healing. That this is not fanciful one may feel from a comparison with the methods of the Apostles; when, for instance, Peter and John said to the lame man, "Look on us."[1] What more natural than that they had seen the Master use a similar means?

But the words are even clearer than the deeds. After this healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda, the Saviour met His critics with the definite assertion, "The Son quickeneth whom He will."[2] And then, immediately, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."[3] To the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, He said that He would for the asking give living water, — such water that it should be a well "springing up unto eternal life."[4] The discourse in the sixth chapter of the Fourth Gospel is sometimes weakened because interpreted as referring only to the Lord's Supper. Its application covers our Saviour's whole Life in the world, including incidentally the Lord's Supper. When therefore He said, "I am the bread of life . . . which I will give for the life of the world,"[5] we would wisely think of His enormous vitality and His power to communicate it to men, rather than of any especial means of that gift. Closely allied with this is the saying to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life;"[6] the saying to Philip, "I am the way, and the

[1] Acts iii. 4.
[2] St. John v. 21.
[3] *Ibid.* v. 26.
[4] *Ibid.* iv. 14.
[5] St. John vi. 35, 51.
[6] *Ibid.* xi. 25.

truth, and the life";[1] the comforting words to the Twelve, "Because I live, ye shall live,"[2] and "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing."[3] More startling than all these, however, are the words, "Before Abraham was, I am."[4] And finally we have the words before the Ascension, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[5]

We cannot escape the conviction that the Man who did these deeds and said these words was conscious of unique vitality, — vitality so full and rich that He longed to give it to every man who would receive it. "I came," said Jesus, "that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."[6]

II. *The Witness of History to His Vitality*

The plain student of history cannot miss the fact that when Christ was buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa, His closest friends were like timid lambs fleeing before a storm. Within two months these apparently inefficient men had begun to change the world in Christ's name.[7] Knowing Him alive after death, they lived, they breathed, for one single purpose, — to speak of Christ, to live the life of Christ, to be Christ. On each first day[8] of the week they broke bread and ate it, they poured out wine and drank it, in remembrance of Jesus, in faith that their

[1] St. John xiv. 6.
[2] *Ibid.* 19.
[3] St. John xvi. 5.
[4] *Ibid.* viii. 58.
[5] St. Matt. xxviii. 20.
[6] St. John x. 10.
[7] Acts ii. 41.
[8] Acts xx. 7; etc.

souls were filled with His Life. Later they were joined by a scholarly tent-maker named Saul of Tarsus. He was so aglow with this Master's life that he kept saying, "For me life is — Christ!" [1] It was a unique vitality which these once inefficient people took on. They faced kings. Lions, fire, agony, could not daunt them. Never had men been so bold, so persistent, so full of life. Men great in the world's eye were all about them; but it is difficult now even to recall their once resounding names. And after all the centuries the words of a seemingly obscure John, Paul, and Peter are quoted even by the children of all civilised lands. These same words are the goads of strong men in the thick of struggle and achievement. And they are the solace of dying eyes. Whence came this wonderful vitality? History says, "Only from Christ." History is frank in acknowledging that this infusion of vitality into weak men, making them thereby giants of heroism and power, is the most amazing miracle the world ever has known. These men, filled with the life of the unseen Christ, were unconquerable. Death had no dominion over them. They smiled at death, so that for them death ceased to be. Life was always and always before them.

It is always perilous to generalise; but it surely is safe to say that all the centuries since Christ have been Christian centuries. The world has been radically changed. The men who stand out in the pages of history as the powers moving forward the destiny of the world have been men who have acknowledged Christ morning and night. The great poetry gropes

[1] Phil. i. 21; Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 4; 1 Thess. iii. 8.

through all minor strains attempting at last to interpret Christ: Christ is behind its inspiration. The influential philosophy, typified by Kant's leadership, comes back from all theories to stand in reverence before the moral law of Christ. Music in its immortal forms of composition moves the spirit of man by such themes as "The Messiah" and "The Redemption." Art has studied form and colour in the vain hope of painting at last a face that shall seem to men somewhat like Christ's. And where do we find the source of the ever-increasing kindness of the world, — the care for sick and poor and maimed, — the hospitals, asylums, and the rest? Not from Plato or Marcus Aurelius. Only from Christ. It is quite beside the question to point out dark spots in our modern civilisation. Just as futile is it to mark the slowness of the world to learn mercy, — for we are often reminded that the slavery of paganism lasted to an extent till the nineteenth Christian century. The stubbornness of the material is no argument against the force which is always playing upon it. We know that an overwhelming vitality has been at work throughout the world, accomplishing miracles year by year, — and the only name for that vitality is Christ.

And what shall we say of our own day? Let me quote from a tried scholar, an independent and vigorous thinker, living at a great centre of learning: "The man in the market, on the exchange, in the factory, in the infirmary, by the sick-bed, anywhere, everywhere, whose life is possessed and ruled and inspired by the great truths of religion, is the true measure of its power. And never at any moment in the whole

history of the Christian faith were there so many men filled, commanded, guided, by the holier and simpler truths of our faith. . . . Never was age more marked by its strong and victorious belief than ours. I know what I say. The truth of Christ is slowly subduing the mind of man into itself. Never was His authority so great as it is now." [1] This is generalisation, but it is the generalisation of an expert witness accustomed to measure words and answer challenges. We may accept it.

And the world does accept such words. Even those critics of life who stand aloof from organised Christianity, who carp at doctrine and form, who decline any share in Christian worship, — even they yield a reverent acknowledgment to Christ's vital energy working in the world. They do not quite see why a trained and delightful man should leave a pleasant home and go to some Arctic wilderness, with Bible and medicine case, to tell barbarians, by word and deed, about the love of Christ; they think the whole proceeding unnatural, unreasonable, unnecessary; but when they see the once strong man, home on furlough, worn, old before his day, but radiant, and when they hear his pathetic, heroic story, — they do not scoff. They bow their heads, tears fill their eyes, and they murmur, "Well, I do not understand it; but it is — Christ!" In the same way we commonly hear a man

[1] Principal A. M. Fairbairn, of Oxford, "Religion in History and in Modern Life," p. 210. Lectures IV., V., and VI. of this volume are inspiring testimony of the influence of Christ in history, and by detail and general grasp are a remarkable contribution to the story of the real results of Christianity.

who is disdainful of Church tell his admiration of the sweet and serious face of some Salvation Army lassie, who has that hour passed him on the street. He suspects that this face was once used to sights of sin, — but now it is all clear and beautiful. And he bows his head and acknowledges the vital power of Christ. Men will often say that they have no care for Christianity; but he is a rare talker who will not say a reverent word of respect for Christ. The vitality of Christ is *felt* even by those who outwardly do not confess His Name. He is felt to be alive with power, as no other, whether unseen or seen. It is the endless tribute to His unique vitality.

III. *The Origin of the Elements of this Vitality*

We are now ready to ask a significant question: Was this vitality a new manifestation in humanity, or was it simply a sort of evolution from existing elements? It was so radically different from all previous forms of vitality, both in quality and in quantity — as a candid examination of history must always show — that there is no possible escape from the belief that into this vitality there came an element quite outside of humanity. No combination of existing elements can explain the results which are so patent to the student of subsequent events. I cannot see any escape from this conclusion.

The question then asserts itself: Was this foreign element introduced in a unique way? In other words, was the birth of Christ different from other births? The answer of a well-authenticated history is that the

birth of Christ was unique: "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." I have already noted the grounds for trusting the historical sources which recount the event;[1] and I have said that the opposition to the credibility of these sources is mainly derived from an *a priori* objection, for quasi-scientific reasons. For our purposes now we must declare the fact as a fact historically established: this is at last the place to speak of its *reasonableness.*

It may seem strange that in a book on Christ's Personality one should be reading thus late of His origin. But it is the natural order. When men, in their prime, prove their greatness, we at once gather all their present history, — the history associated with their accomplishment. It is only after many years that the student delves into the childhood, the parentage, the ancestry. So, too, in Christ's life, until we have seen how wonderful He is, what has been His interior strength and His unlimited influence, we are not sufficiently equipped to talk of His origin. It is not fitting or safe to talk of His origin and parentage till we have felt (however halting our power to explain) the full force of His divine personality. Remembering this, we may turn back to the years just after His earthly career. The earlier New Testament writers said nothing of the Virgin Birth: very possibly they did not know of it.[2] When the sacred story was at last

[1] *Vide Supra*, pp. 46–53.

[2] *Cf.* Ramsay, "Was Christ Born in Bethlehem?" p. 88: "It appears that either the Virgin was still living when Luke was in Palestine during the years 57 and 58 — which is a quite possible supposition on the almost universally accepted assumption that she

told, it came to the ears of people already convinced of Christ's unequalled power. There is no doubt that the New Testament shows an increasing valuation of Christ's dignity as His invisible presence swayed the souls of men. St. Peter's sermon at Pentecost [1] seems inadequate when we contrast it with the words of St. Paul and St. John. We have ample reason to believe that those who knew Christ best were daily amazed to find how little they knew His real stature. They went to the depths of their honest hearts to explain Him. It was when they found themselves baffled at every turn that the sweet story of the manger at Bethlehem was given them to help them to understand at least a little more. The earliest writers recorded achievements; a later age craved to know somewhat

was quite young when Jesus was born — or Luke had conversed with some one very intimate with her, who knew her heart and could give him what was almost as good as first-hand information." Ramsay surmises the Virgin's reasons for not telling her secret earlier, p. 76. "At Nazareth nothing was generally known. Jesus had been born far away. His parents brought him to Nazareth after some time had elapsed. Even after Herod's death his shadow lay heavy on the land; and the parents, being subjects of his son Antipas, were not likely to talk to their neighbours about the old king's relations to the child and about the prophecies of Simeon and Anna — apart from the consideration that the whole subject must have seemed too sacred for gossip. Mary did not herself comprehend the things that had occurred. She kept them hid in her heart, and apparently did not even tell her husband what was in her mind. This child was not to be an unalloyed delight either to her country or herself; he was 'set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel, and for a sign which is spoken against'; and for herself, 'a sword should pierce through her own soul.' It was a dread and vague future about which she pondered in the depths of her own mind."

[1] Acts ii. 14-40.

of origins. It is the natural order. We should, I am sure, stumble less to-day if we reflected, first, upon all that Christ has done and upon all that He is, and then, with hearts full of wonder, and then only, turned to ask how He came to be. We should be less likely to speak quickly of the *a priori* impossibility of certain events.[1]

In attempting the interpretation of the Virgin Birth we must mark off one or two explanations which are not quite satisfactory. In the first place, the Virgin Birth is not the proof of the Divinity of Christ. Historically the testimony to Christ's divinity was deep and wide before men began to talk of the Virgin Birth. This is not in any way to disparage the fact or the importance of the incident. Its place is secure. But it is an incident. It can be imagined that one might be virgin born and yet not be anything more than human. It is only because Christ's vitality is *in effect* so unique, so superabundant, that the manner of His origin becomes significant. When one is already

[1] I have already (p. 47) pointed out that though the objection to the Virgin Birth is usually made in the name of science, it is not scientists who lead in the attempt to depose the fact. "We know too little," says Sir Oliver Lodge (Hibbert Journal, Jan. 1906, p. 327), "to be able to dogmatise on such things: we must observe and generalise as we can." Bishop Gore has made all readers familiar with Huxley's famous verdict: "The mysteries of the Church are child's play as compared with the mysteries of Nature. . . . Virgin procreation and resuscitation from apparent death are ordinary phenomena for the naturalist." (Quoted in Bampton Lectures, Am. Ed. p. 266.) In other words, the trained scientist has no *a priori* objection to the Virgin Birth. He merely asks for the historical evidence.

assured of Christ's divinity, then, and not till then, does the Virgin Birth have a meaning.[1]

Another interpretation of the Virgin Birth which is not quite satisfactory is the assertion that it explains the sinlessness of Christ. This explanation is unsatisfactory, not *ipso facto*, but because of the way in which it is generally worked out. The phenomenon of a sinless man is unique; and one naturally demands an explanation. People imbued with Manichæan heresy have argued that humanity through hereditary sin is essentially bad and that therefore no good can come out of it; so that to produce a sinless man a miraculous birth is necessary; and therefore Christ was born of a virgin mother. But there is an insuperable

[1] *Cf.* Principal W. F. Adeney, "The Virgin Birth and the Divinity of Christ" (Essays for the Times, No. 11): "Neither Mark, John, Peter, Paul, James, nor the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, makes the slightest reference to the manner of our Lord's birth. One of two conclusions must be deduced from this wholesale silence. Either these New Testament teachers did not know of the wonder; or knowing it they did not consider it essential to their message. There is no possible escape from that dilemma. For if you hold that they knew it and considered it to be essential, you have to charge them with gross unfaithfulness, not merely in failing to declare the whole counsel of God, but in keeping back part of its very essence. But every one of these New Testament teachers held and taught the Divinity of Christ. That great truth is wrought into the warp and woof of the New Testament. You must tear the book to shreds and scatter the fragments to the four winds if you would get rid of it. What conclusions must we deduce from this fact? First, the testimony of the Divinity of Christ is measurably greater than the evidence for the Virgin Birth. This is not to discredit the latter idea. . . . Believing in the far greater wonder of the Incarnation we may be prepared to admit the minor wonder of the Bethlehem story, though not otherwise" (pp. 30 f).

difficulty here: the virgin mother was human. Even that branch of Christendom which has sought to be rid of the difficulty by assigning to her in turn a miraculous birth has only removed the difficulty one step. She is still human and in so far is an inheritor of the evil past. Not so, clearly, can Christ's sinlessness be explained. He inherited, as a man, through His human mother, the evil tendencies of the race. His sinlessness was not of the order of necessity. He strove for it with such intensity of battle that "His sweat became as it were great drops of blood." [1] The Virgin Birth did not make Him one whit less a man than He would have been had His birth been after the ordinary manner. Whatever the difficulties of coping with sin, He inherited them all *as a man* through His virgin mother.

This common method of explaining Christ's sinlessness through the Virgin Birth is not, however, the only method possible, by which the Virgin Birth may be related to His sinlessness. We may think of the divine element introduced into humanity in the Virgin Birth as the new force from without, which, though not lessening the difficulty of the struggle, made the victory, not necessary, but possible. The humanity was not pushed aside: it was the same humanity still in all its completeness and limitation; but into it was put this hitherto foreign element which we symbolise under the name of the Virgin Birth. It was the new force by which humanity in the Person of Jesus was to conquer sin.

But even here there will be people to rise with the

[1] St. Luke xxii. 44.

objection that this element of divine force could, to their minds, be induced entirely by spiritual means, and so bestowed upon a man born quite in the natural way. Therefore, ultimately, this explanation of Christ's sinlessness by the Virgin Birth is not likely to win many of the doubtful souls who peer into this mystery. We must go farther.

Let us then come back to the thought of our Saviour's unique vitality, — a vitality which not only marked His career in Palestine, but has been the most powerful force ever since, throughout the world. That is the phenomenon which we must explain: it is not sinlessness; it is a new, overwhelming, controlling Life. Whence did it come?

Before attemping a categorical answer, we must observe that this Life has been manifest in the world not only by a change in spiritual conditions, but by a change in the material aspect of the world. There is a material quality resident in this Christ-vitality which has been moving over the years. This is seen clearly when one reflects that the effects of Christ's Vitality are not the possession of those only who appropriate them by faith. These effects are in some real way incorporated, objectively, in humanity. We speak of civilisation as having become Christian. There are men who say that, though they do not follow Christ, they will give money and thought to hospitals and orphanages. But hospitals and orphanages are effects of nothing else but Christ's Vitality, absorbing the world. So it is that men to-day, whether Christians or not, are sharing a humanity into which Christ has brought a new element. Nor is this only an out-

ward possession. So impartial a judge as Lecky,[1] has abundantly proved that Christianity brought with it a new power to cope with moral taint. However men have failed, this power is now in the race; and man, belonging to the humanity which Christ entered, has *as man* a share in this new help toward righteousness. If he consciously reaches out for it, he is made the more powerful in his struggle; if he simply breathes he is, to some extent even then, partaker of the force.

This new force in Life is then a new material, we may almost say a new substance, in the world. This, I maintain, is not theory, but well attested fact, known to every student of morals and civilisation. Now what is the origin of this force? Shall we be content to say that it slipped in unaware, like a thief in the night?[2] We may say so, if we have no historical

[1] "History of European Morals."

[2] In no case can we consistently think of Jesus as simply *any* man, into whom the Divine came as a sort of tenant. This shallow explanation seems to rouse a good deal of thought, ancient and modern, about Christ. *Cf.* Professor C. A. Briggs (North American Review, June, 1906, p. 873): "Such a merely external union of the Divine Son with a human individual could not accomplish human salvation, as the Christian church has always clearly seen. If the Son of God only inhabited the man Jesus, He might save that man, but how could He accomplish the salvation of the human race? Such an inhabitation of the Son of God would not differ in principle from the indwelling of the divine spirit in a man. The man Jesus would be a prophet, a hero, a great exemplar, but not the Saviour of mankind." It is interesting to note that even those who speak disparagingly of the accomplishment of the church and its interpretation of Christ, nevertheless look upon Christ as indeed the world's Saviour, not only potentially but actually. *Cf.* the startling anonymous book (published by John Lane, 1905), "The Creed of Christ," pp. 218 ff.

evidence for anything more. But we have such historical evidence: history says that the supreme moment when this force was added to humanity was when Jesus Christ was "conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary."

Our age, more than any age before, is ready for this truth. Our philosophy has passed through various stages of materialism and pure idealism. Kant is still the great modern thinker; and his idealism is built upon the subtle reality of a *somewhat*[1] in the material universe. We are beginning to be paradoxical, and to talk of the spirituality of matter. New physical discoveries, whether in the electric current or in the so-called ether, send men to their knees. We are feeling that there is not matter and spirit, but that spirit and matter are someway bound together in one baffling reality. When we find a new force, we seek to find for it a source both in spirit and in matter.

The Virgin Birth at best can take us only a little way in the attempt to solve the most stupendous event of history. Perhaps that is why some evangelists and apostles, if they knew of the Virgin Birth, did not think it worth while to speak of it. But, in our day more than ever, this doctrine of the Virgin Birth is suggesting — to say the least — how the new divine Force and Vitality entered humanity. We cannot imagine any details, but in some material way (let us say it frankly) the new Creation was consummated. That which had not been in humanity, and that which could not evolve itself from humanity, by a divine Act came into humanity from without. The explana-

[1] *Ding an Sich.*

tion may be dim. But it helps a little toward the appreciation of an event which must of necessity be past all human discovery. It opens perhaps only a tiny window, but through it we seem to see how it was that the Man Christ Jesus could dominate a world with His Vitality, and how it is that this Vitality should be never so efficient as to-day. He was Man, but He was New Man, — a New Creation.

IV. *The Transmission of His Vitality*

In His last conferences with His disciples the Saviour said that it was expedient for them that He go away.[1] He linked His going with a larger return through the Holy Spirit. This change was so transcendently significant that the great-minded St. Paul yearned toward a full knowledge of it: "That I may know Him," he said, "and the *power of His Resurrection.*"[2] There is the story here of the transmission of Christ's Vitality.

It seems right to believe from our records that during His earthly career Christ's Vitality, unique as it was, was locked within a human individual. He was not merely an individual, — for no man, strictly speaking, is merely an individual. But for our sakes He gave Himself no advantages or privileges which are not common to humanity. His disciples were strong, in the light of His physical presence; but when His physical presence was removed they ceased to feel the help of His Vitality. The great transformation symbolised by the death and resurrection of Jesus accomplished

[1] St. John xvi. 7. [2] Phil. iii. 10.

a completer scope for the exercise of this Vitality. He who had been an individual (if one may speak roughly) became universalised. They who had depended on His physical presence felt His power and His help never so keenly as after His final vanishing.[1] At any moment, in any place, His Vitality now and henceforth was theirs.[2]

[1] St. Luke xxiv. 52.

[2] Dr. D. W. Forrest has recently spoken significantly of the reality of Christ's presence with the Apostles after His physical departure (*Op. Cit.*, pp. 357 ff.). "It was not by merely reverting to the past, but by keeping their eyes open to the present action of their Living Lord, that the Apostles discovered where His authority lay. . . . Where His word or example was insufficient for present guidance they never doubted that fresh light would break for them. . . . And in taking up this attitude whereby they laid themselves open to the further truths which God intended to convey, they were vindicated by the results." Dr. Forrest allies himself with those [like Bishop Boyd Carpenter, "Introduction to the Scriptures," pp. 48–50] who discredit any attempt to find in the "unrecorded forty days" after the Resurrection the commands of Christ for the future. He shows, with practical conclusiveness, how in such a great question as the "Gentile problem," the Apostles did not look back to any explicit command, but felt themselves *at the very moment* possessed of His authority. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," they said. So also again (*Op. Cit.*, p. 350): "Hence it is that Christ represents the bestowal of the Spirit as ushering in a more blessed time for the Disciples than they had enjoyed during His outward companionship with them. The Spirit was not to be a pale substitute for Himself, as they had known Him; His coming was Christ's coming, in the highest sense of the word; it was Christ's own presence in the 'only mode which could be quite absolutely direct and primary and real' (Moberly), because the only mode in which He could become a vital source of spiritual strength *in us*, and also adapt Himself to every variety of our personal necessity amid the ever-changing form of circumstance. Neither of these functions could be discharged by

It is necessary to mark that this universalising of Christ's Vitality was not at the expense of His humanity. Into this element of universal help He had carried humanity. The Vitality which has been so obviously flowing from His Life all the decades and centuries that even the casual thinker recognises its source, has been coming not from God only, but from humanity also — the humanity enlarged and renewed by the Life of Jesus Christ. In so far as Jesus Christ was a man, just so far did humanity in Him gain an unprecedented achievement; and the victorious and still conquering Vitality is, whatever else may be said of it, the Vitality of a Man.

The Resurrection of Christ was therefore radically different from any previously hoped-for resurrection. It was not only a resurrection to life, but it was a resurrection to *this* life. All that was human and that had been associated with Jesus of Nazareth was accepted as an inalienable possession of that eternal and universalised Personality, the risen Christ, — and this same Christ rose to a life among men, among them to spend and be spent — the leader and central force of His redeemed race forevermore.

Him in the period of His Incarnation. The sundering of outward relations, however intimate, had to precede this inward identification of Christ with the soul of man."

CHAPTER XVIII

His Divine Authority

THE culminating question of Christ's Personality must always be in what sense He spoke for God. This is not merely a theological question, of interest only to those who weigh theories; but is, first of all, a practical question, of indispensable import to the busy people who, having met adversity, must find courage to go forward to new effort. The man of the world often reads the universe with the subconscious help of Christianity, and then gaily says that he does not need Christ to make him an optimist. But the fact is plain that all so-called natural theology leaves the thoughtful man midway between hope and fear. History has proved again and again that the natural theologian must at best develop into something like a Stoic. For the story of the Creator as we see Him in His creation is so multiform that even a thoughtful man begs for an interpreter. The sweet stillness and fragrance of a June morning proclaim a Supreme Master of Love, — and the thoughtful man is confident. As the day wears to evening, thick darkness may cover the country-side and the wind may twine itself into a tornado and bring destruction to a happy village: all is ruin, misery, death, — and the thoughtful man wonders

whose is the cruel Force which invents such wanton destruction. So the Stoic speaks, not flippantly, but with a sad sincerity: —

"This world is very odd we see,
We do not comprehend it;
But in one fact we all agree,
God won't, and we can't, mend it.

"Being common sense, it can't be sin
To take it as I find it;
The pleasure to take pleasure in;
The pain, try not to mind it."[1]

Now into this world Christ came; and He declared with a radiant definiteness that the Power beyond and above and in all things is the Loving Person, God the Father. The message is so exactly the message that one wishes to hear, that some men accept the message as if it were self-sufficient, and they never ask, "By what authority did Christ give it?" So it is that we have the strange phenomenon of men who put confidence in Christ's exposition of the universe because it seems to them ideally beautiful; and as for Christ Himself — well, they say, He was certainly remarkable, but He was not more remarkable than any man may be. This is to declare that He had uniquely splendid flights of imagination. . . . But how dare one be comforted by such thin dreams!

There is ample proof that the thoughtful man, however removed from orthodoxy, is no longer con-

[1] A. H. Clough's "Dipsychus."

tent to base confidence in the Christian message without sounding the authority by which Christ gave it. In answering the question of Christ's authority I shall therefore endeavour to give the answer which modern scholarship of an unbiased sort is evidently tending to give.

I. *Though Man, Christ is More than Man*

"The Divinity of Jesus," says a great English scientist,[1] "is the truth which now requires to be reperceived, to be illumined afresh by new knowledge, to be cleansed and revivified by the wholesome flood of scepticism which has poured over it; it can be freed now from all trace of grovelling superstition, and can be recognised freely and enthusiastically." Certain phrases in the article in which this sentence is imbedded might seem to limit the importance of these words; but nothing can impair their chief interest. This chief interest is that a conspicuous and highly respected representative of scientific thought is awaiting and expecting clearer evidence of the authority by which Christ spoke as no other man has spoken.

Let us now turn to a radical German theologian, who is as lucid as he is free. "It is impossible," says Professor Wernle,[2] "that a time should ever come for Christianity when any single Christian should acquire for his fellow-Christians the significance of Jesus." Dr. Wernle then quotes passages from the

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge, Hibbert Journal, April, 1906, p. 655.

[2] "Beginnings of Christianity" (tr. G. A. Bienemann), vol. i. pp. 38, 39.

Synoptic Gospels, and continues: "Now it is clear that a self-consciousness that is more than merely human speaks from these words. And this is the mystery of the origin of Christianity. What we need to do above all is to accept it as a fact — a fact which demands a patient and reverent hearing." These words from an ordinary writer would have no especial meaning. In the able volumes where they stand, they tell the trend of the most fearless German thought.[1]

I cannot refrain from one further quotation in this connection, and that from an American thinker, Professor Du Bose. Though what we call an orthodox theologian, Dr. Du Bose has his windows all open and

[1] In speaking of German theological scholarship one can never forget Professor Harnack. "Again and again," says this great man ("What is Christianity?" tr. T. B. Saunders, pp. 129 ff.), "in the history of mankind men of God have come forward in the sure consciousness of possessing a divine message, and of being compelled, whether they will or not, to deliver it. But the message has always happened to be imperfect; in this spot or that defective; . . . and very often the prophet did not stand the test of being himself an example of his message. But in this case the message brought was of the profoundest and most comprehensive character; it went to the very root of mankind and, although set in the framework of the Jewish nation, it addressed itself to the whole of humanity — the message from God the Father. Defective it is not, and its real kernel may be readily freed from the inevitable husk of contemporary form. Antiquated it is not, and in life and strength it still triumphs to-day over all the past. He who delivered it has as yet yielded His place to no man, and to human life He still to-day gives a meaning and an aim — He *the Son of God*." These are such words as the admirers of Dr. Harnack would expect him to say; but because their reasonableness appeals to the man of the world they are highly important in declaring the direction of present day thought.

knows what thoughtful men everywhere are saying. This passage, therefore, from his last book tells the story of one avenue by which honest thinkers are forced to approach Christ: "How then was the so unique or exceptional personality of Jesus to be accounted for or explained? Was He only a human individual, exceptionally blessed or graced? Or, while perfect man, was He, just because perfect man, something more than man? Perfection is no mark of our common humanity, and needs a very high accounting for. So from the beginning begins a questioning which Christianity answers for itself in the Gospel of the Incarnation." [1]

It will be seen in all these indications of modern thought that the conviction of Christ's preëminence and uniqueness is coming not from theological considerations, but from historical comparisons. That both by character and by influence He should so persistently out-top the rest of humanity is immediate ground for placing Him in a class by Himself. A very notable man, recently dead, seems at first to be the most striking figure which his particular craft or profession has produced; but the year is scarcely over before his name is dropped among the names of his illustrious fellows of the past, — and a few years may find him in a very inferior place among them. It is the perennial superiority of Christ *in all ways* which is compelling even unwilling students to declare that though man, Christ is more than man.

[1] "The Gospel in the Gospels," p. 7.

II. *The Bearer of a Divine Message, Christ is Himself the Message*

Having felt the unique character and influence of Christ, the modern student is forced to examine Christ's message with scrupulous care. The radical scholar often complains because his bigoted conservative brother would gladly impale him on the horns of this dilemma: either Christ was the divine Son of God — or He was a gross impostor. Perhaps the dilemma is harsh, but it warns the scholar that if he is willing to say that Christ is perfect in character — or even surpasses all other men in character — he, as a clear-minded scholar, must be careful how he tones down or explains away any words or inferences of Christ about Himself.

Professor Schmiedel has done the cause of scholarship incalculable service by pointing out that of all the recorded words of Jesus only five brief passages are absolutely credible. His ground for this astonishing verdict is that these five passages are the only words which can be interpreted as even possibly inconsistent with a record which looks upon our Lord as divine.[1] Strangely enough, Dr. Schmiedel does not feel the force of two very striking deductions which must be made from his own observation. The first deduction is that the Four Gospels, even the Synoptic Gospels, are so filled with the atmosphere of Christ's divinity, that they must practically be blotted out to rid the story of the testimony. The second deduction

[1] Encyclopædia Biblica, p. 1881 — article "Gospels."

is that when writers were so convinced of Christ's divinity, that page after page breathed adoration, only the utmost historical trustworthiness could have impelled them to record what to their simple minds — as Dr. Schmiedel assures us — must have seemed inconsistent. But if they were trustworthy in recording what might have seemed to be limitations, they surely were conscientiously exact in recording what redounded to Christ's dignity and honour. He that is faithful in little is faithful also in much. There is no possible escape from the logic of such criticism. A history which is incontestably valid proclaims that He who came with the supreme message of God to man was Himself the message.

With this assurance we pass at once from any region of argument into a very kingdom of heaven where we are to *feel*, as never before, God's reality. It might have been sufficiently assuring if Christ had explained to mankind that he could prove to them that the Power governing the world is altogether beneficent. "You acknowledge," He might have said, "that I have no fault — can you not then believe me when I say that I *know* that not a sparrow falls to the earth but God cares?" The authority of that message would have been exceptionally high, but it would not have told what we now know of the Love of God. The words of Christ are precious beyond any telling, but His inestimable message is Himself.

Here then is the message: God's attitude to men is the attitude of Jesus Christ to the men and women of Palestine. God, we say, longed to be with us, — He loved us enough for that. Nor was it a mere longing,

— He *became* one with us. He lived our life, — just as we live it. He had friends, — quite as we have friends. He met limitations, — as we must meet them. He had pain, — as we have pain. He had failure, — as we have failure. He had the agony of sorrow, — as we have the agony of sorrow. He loved, — as we love; that is, he loved and was unable to do what love *would* do. We are already beyond any power of coherent thought. All *a priori* ideas of God are shattered. We shut our eyes and try to grasp the message. Sorrow, pain, failure, still are mysteries — but how the light of heaven shines on them, with the knowledge that He who allows them to be, undertook them all in the life of that Jesus from whom henceforth He nevermore can be separated. God is one with us. Not Lord, Master, King — but our Brother — ourselves!

It is the thoroughness of this divine message which staggers imagination, and makes scholars afraid. God was not content, having made us, to help us from a distance. He was not content to say soothing words, either through His messengers, or directly to the solitary heart. He was not content merely to explain and justify the order of His universe. Nothing could satisfy Him till He had come so close to our humanity that God and man were one, — till He had gone to the lowest depth of human experience, till He had risen to the heights of human experience, till He had felt on every side — not only as God, but as man — all the nooks and crannies of human experience, — till He had made us know by His own touch that God is *our* God, — a God who cares for all our joys and

failures and griefs — because *as a man* He knows how man feels the sting of defeat and the glory of victory.

This, then, is what the world means, the world which is so crowded with bitterness beating upon mirth, with hate besieging even the fastnesses of love, with pain driving away all comfort: it means Love, ultimate and final Love, catching up all that is hard and doubtful and transmuting it at last into joy — Love enthroned supreme in the heart of the mightiest, God Himself — Love so real, so deep, that God became Man.[1]

"I am he that beareth witness of myself," said Jesus.[2] He was His own best argument. "Come unto me," He said again, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[3] In Christ God gave to the world confidence and peace: history has been telling us so all down the years. But the means whereby the world has received this rest is that in Christ God gave to the world — *Himself*. So it has come about that critics of Christianity stand in awe and reverence before Christ. Men at length released from the galling chains of a heartless and logical Cal-

[1] St. John viii. 18.

[2] It is not within the province of this book to show how the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity guards what are called "necessary ideas" of theology and philosophy, while seeing in Christ the perfect revelation of God. The Second Person of the Trinity stands for the eternal humanity in the Godhead, generated from the Father and coequal with Him. Patripassianism is dangerous because it goes only part way. All true thoughts of God must advance side by side without destroying one another. Historic theology has always carefully declared that God was incarnate, not in His absolute, triune Being, but in the Eternal Son. Yet the Incarnation concerns the Godhead as a whole. He that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father.

[3] St. Matt. xi. 28.

vinism or a mechanical ecclesiasticism rise to condemn that Christian interpretation of Christ which has, perhaps, in their youth, been bound to their souls. They have, they say, "gone back to Christ" — and oh, He is, they declare, infinitely beautiful! Straightway they tear up the creeds and condemn the Church. Such an iconoclast,[1] concealing his name but not his history,[2] has recently written: "It is true that Christianity has, from the beginning of things, had one good angel, by whose beneficent influence it has again and again been saved from itself, — the incomparable personality of Christ."[3] And again: "Of the debt which Christendom owes to the personality of Christ — the Christ of Gospel story — I need not attempt to speak. Suffice it to say that from highest to lowest, from the most heroic to the most homely, all the good desires and good deeds of Christian men and women have been due. . . to the personal influence of the historic Christ, — in other words, to affection for and trust in the friend and guide and master whom the Gospel stories taught men, and still teach men, to know and love."[4] A narrow philosophy of history and a stupid prejudice against certain aspects of truth may underlie such iconoclastic "returns to Christ"; but they are typical of a compelling drift in modern thought, radical as well as conservative, which commands men to find in Christ His own highest authority and to make Him to be His own clearest message.

[1] The author of "The Creed of Christ," 1905.

[2] "When I was a child I was taught that Christ, etc." *Ibid.* p. 159. [3] *Ibid.* pp. 174 ff. [4] *Ibid.* p. 202.

III. *Christ, Being Divine, Is to Be Interpreted as Man*

In spite of the repeated pronouncements, on the Church's authority, based upon a profound and wide experience, men are prone to forget or ignore the invariable humanity of Christ. The most prevalent error in Christian thought has always been the heresy which makes the divine Christ only *seem* to be man. Everything which He has taught us, by word and by deed, He translated into human terms. In Him we see God in humanity. The translation contains no foreign phrases, yet it is utterly accurate and complete. With the material of this life He lived out the whole character of God.

If this seems an unwarranted assertion we must fall back upon the inner conviction of the most efficient souls of the ages. I do not say brilliant thinkers, for thinkers have often done nothing but spin theories. The man who has accomplished great deeds, and incidentally has told in whose Name he did them, is the man whose word really counts. That Name is the Human God, — with all the philosophical shivering which the title must cause, — who has been the acknowledged Life of the great doers of deeds.

If one were to dare to predict in what way thoughtful men would approach the study of Christ's Personality in years to come, one might wisely say that there is to be less and less of prepossession as the eye is lifted to behold Him. Hitherto science has said, "These and these traits I shall not look for, — they are impossible." Philosophy has taken up the parable saying, "And these traits, and these, *I* shall not look for, — meta-

physically they are impossible." And even theology, a little pale and frightened, has said, "Nothing new about my Master can be told, — let the book be closed!" With an increased sense of the mystery of life, all branches of learning are becoming more humble. The impossible has too often happened of late to make a wise man feel secure in setting boundaries. We have certain luminous and sure outlines of Christ's Personality; but they are confessedly outlines. He has, we all know, told us more of man than any other; and so we say that He is the head and crown of humanity. He has, we all know equally well, not only told us about God as never man has spoken of Him, but He has shown us *in Himself* the very soul of God; and so we say that He is "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God."

We cannot know what news the coming years will bring, but the trend of modern thought leads us to believe that there will be less and less inclination to reduce the Person of Christ to such tame proportions that the dull and unimaginative man plodding by will say that he understands Him. Scholarship is daily becoming bolder. The period of easy sifting, weighing, and trying will be followed by gracious years of plenty, — when scholarship will dare to believe the largest, most resplendent. With a mind as much bent on accuracy as before, scholars will note not only the realities of earth, but also the realities of heaven. There will be a passing of that plague of all true scholarship, — the desire to even off all the ends of conviction and to reduce all intimations to a consistent whole. Christ we may be sure will never be less to

thought, He must always be more. He will be more, always more human, and in the light of His human achievement His little brothers will do deeds hitherto counted too glorious even for dreams. And He will be always more divine; so that men seeing, as never before, the *Godliness* of God in His loving, simple peasant life, will rise to sing their trust and happiness, and then will, like lovers and saints, as in a frenzy of gratitude, go forth, for His sake, to give life, death, and joy — if only they may tell another of their Saviour and their God.

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